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No 132 October 30 – November 12 90p/DM 5.50

KERRANG!

WASP

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SAXON
ZZ TOP
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BLACKIE LAWLESS of WASP: pic Ray Palmer

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QUEENSRŸCHE/FM to support Bon Jovi

■ **QUEENSRŸCHE** WILL be playing three shows in the UK at the end of November supporting **Bon Jovi.** These are at the *Hammersmith Odeon* on November 24/25 and Bradford St George's Hall on the 26 (this last date was originally scheduled for November 7).

In addition, the band (vocalist **Geoff Tate** above left, main pic and guitarist **Chris DeGarmo**) will be playing a headline warm-up show at Central Park, Burton-On-Trent on November 23. Tickets can be obtained from the venue and usual agencies, priced £4.50 in advance/£5.50 on the night. The box office telephone number is: 0283-63265. Postal applications can also be made to: Central Park Venue, Bargates High St., Burton-On-Trent. Cheques should be made payable to: Hopebell Leisure Ltd and an SAE included.

However, all other BJ British dates will feature **FM** (above, inset pic) as the opening act.

■ **CHROME MOLLY** will issue their second album, as yet untitled, through *Powerstation Records* during January. Produced by **Craig Thompson** at *The Slaughterhouse Studios* in North Yorkshire, it will include some of the following tracks: **'Take Me I'm Yours', 'CMA', 'Bob Geldof', 'That's The Way It Is', 'Stand Proud', 'Steel Against The Sky', 'Something Special', 'Look Out For No. 1', 'Before You Go'** and **'Let Go'.**

In addition, a special mini-album will be issued in France during November to coincide with a series of 15 dates in the country. This will feature: 'Take Me I'm Yours', **'I Want To Find Out', 'Nuclear Attack', 'Lonely', 'Don't Let Go'** and **'Take It Or Leave It (Molly Mix)'.**

TERRA TALES

■ WANT TO know more about **Terraplane**? OK, after a rather shakey start to their recording career this flighty fivesome (pictured above) are currently mid-way through recording a new album for *Epic Records,* which should be available in March 1987. As of this time, they've completed four cuts: **'I Will Come Out Fighting', 'Promised Land', 'Hearts On Fire'** and **'If That's What It Takes',** all recorded at *Trident II Studios* with the mixing undertaken at *Mayfair Studios,* both in London. Actually, the last named track is already scheduled as their next single, to be released during January '87.

Production this time around is by **Phil Pickett,** who has no previous credits except for the rather amusing fact that he was once the keyboards player in Seventies pop combo **Sailor**! And if that isn't bold enough, they've also roped in the assistance of backing vocalists **Helen Terry** and **Ruby Turner** from **Culture Club** and keyboards courtesy of **Mark Silvester,** a member of the reformed **Airrace.**

Commenting on the direction of the new tracks, guitarist **Luke Morley** had this to say: "Basically, the roots are still very much rock as you might expect, but we've stepped out of the closet a little bit. In fact, some of the material is decidedly different; there's more of a *Motown* influence on some songs and we've used a brass section for one particular track. It's a bold move I know but our experience has widened considerably over the last year or so and we've grown with it."

Terraplane interrupted their recording schedule for a handful of headline gigs plus a support slot with **ZZ Top** on their British tour in October; they play the *Marquee Club* in London on October 30/31 and will then be returning to the studio on November 10, working like mad to complete their album (a total of 11-12 songs will be recorded) by Christmas.

"We've learnt a hell of a lot in the last two years and perhaps we expected a little too much," concludes Luke. "One thing I want to stress, though, is that Terraplane *is* durable and we'll go on for as long as it takes to make it."

DEREK OLIVER

`GOD´ RETURNS

■ **ERIC CLAPTON** (left) returns to the UK during January to play the following shows: *Manchester Apollo* January 3 (tickets are priced at £10/£8), *London Royal Albert Hall* 6/7 (£12.50/£10.50/£8.50). All tickets are now on sale.

Clapton's touring band will include **Steve Ferrone** (drums), **Nathan East** (bass) and **Greg Phillinganes** (keyboards). And a new album, **'August',** will be put out on the *Duck* label to coincide with the dates. Production has been handled by **Phil Collins,** with **Tom Dowd** taking care of engineering duties.

Collins also plays drums on the album and helps out with some backing vocals. **Tina Turner** shares lead vocals on a track titled **'Tearing Us Apart'** and back-up on **'Hold On'.**

STARS ON 45

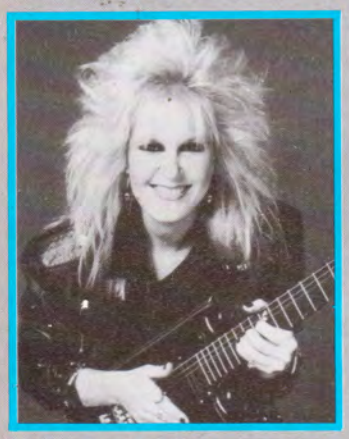
■ *MUSIC FOR NATIONS* issue a double compilation album titled **'The Singles'** on November 28. The full track listing is: **'Echoes Of A Distant Battle'** (**Tank**), **'Sweet Sixteen'** (**Rox**), **'A Cry In The Night'** (**Virgin Steele** – a remixed version), **'Jump In The Fire'** (**Metallica**), **'Black Funeral'** (**Mercyful Fate**), **'Blondie Girl'** (**Earthshaker**), **'Suzie Blue'** (**Alaska**), **'Animal (F**k Like A Beast)'** (**WASP**), **'Roadracer'** (**Loudness**), **'It's My Life'** (**Wendy O. Williams**, above with **Gene Simmons** who co-wrote the song with fellow **Kiss** man **Paul Stanley**), **'Creeping Death'** (Metallica), **'Feel The Knife'** (**Exciter**), **'All Over You'** (**Rogue Male**), **'Steel The Light'** (**Q5**), **'Miss You Tonight'** (Alaska), **'Heaven Tonight'** (**Waysted**), **'I Don't Wanna Be The Fool'** (**Rio**), **'Information'** (**Eric Martin**), **'Rock (Rock)'** (**Baby Tuckoo**), **'Turn To Stone'** (**Legs Diamond**), **'Belfast'** (Rogue Male), **'Atlantic Radio'** (Rio) and **'Mad Locust Rising'** (**Agent Steel**).

■ FOLLOWING THE recent departure of drummer **Leonard Haze** (see *Mayhem* last issue), **Y&T** have recruited Philadelphia native **Jimmy DeGraffo.**

DeGraffo was previously involved in the pre-production for **Ozzy Osbourne**'s most recent album, **'The Ultimate Sin'**, and also filled in with **Mama's Boys** last year when **Tommy MacManus** went down with leukemia during the band's European tour. He will make his live debut with Y&T at a special Hallowe'en show in the US.

The foursome, now signed to *Geffen Records* following a lengthy liaison with *A&M*, are scheduled to begin work on a new album on December 1; the producer for the project has still to be announced, but it's likely that the San Franciscans will be returning to the heavier direction marked out by such previous LPs as **'Earthshaker'** and **'Black Tiger'.**

Haze, meanwhile, more than a little disorientated after 14 years with the troupe, is currently considering his next move.



SANTA FORD

■ **LITA FORD** (above), still working on material for her next studio album, tentatively titled **'The Bride Wore Black'**, is to record a special Christmas single in Los Angeles. Former **Runaways** drummer **Sandy West** and **Driver** bassist **Rudy Sarzo** will guest on the as-yet untitled track. (Sarzo, incidentally, has also been spotted rehearsing with the reformed **Angel**, which must raise question marks about the status of bassist **Felix Robinson**.)

With Ms. Ford's recent departure from *Vertigo Records*, it's not yet known which label will pick up the number.

■ **DEEP PURPLE** will issue their latest album through *Polydor* early next year. Titled **'The House Of Blue Light'**, it was produced by band bassist **Roger Glover**. UK dates are expected to follow the LP's release.

■ **OVERKILL**, FROM New York, will be issuing an album titled **'Taking Over'** through *Megaforce Records* in the US during February.

Megaforce Records will also be putting out picture disc versions of the following records during November: **'Armed An' Dangerous' (Anthrax)**, **'Whiplash' (Metallica)** and **'Melissa' (Mercyful Fate).**

■ **QUASAR** ARE currently seeking a lead vocalist. Interested parties should send a tape/biography/photo to: **Keith Turner, *Q Records & Tapes*, 60 Bowsprit Point, Mellish St., London E14 8NU. Tel: 01 987 3908.**

■ A NEW band under the handle of **Zen Machine** has just been put together in the Liverpool area.

The line-up is **Keith Mulholland** (bass – previously with **Nutz** and **Rage**), **Gordon Logan** (drums – formerly with **S-Hawk** and **One On One**) and **David Maxwell** (guitar/vocals – ex- One On One).

■ LOS ANGELES band **VVSI** have signed a deal with *New Renaissance Records* and will issue an album titled **'No Ace At Hand'** during November.

The band's line-up is **Tommy Gunn** (lead vocals), **Dennis Chick** (lead guitar), **Robin Houde** (bass) and **Chris Moore** (drums).

■ **LA ROCHE**, who describe themselves as a 'hi-tek AOR band', are currently seeking a lead vocalist in the **Joe Lynn Turner/Michael Bolton/Steve Perry** mould. Interested parties should send a tape/biography/photo to: **Martin Ward, St. Hellier, Church Lane, Undy, Newport, Gwent NP6 3EN.**

■ **GENOCIDE** LEAD vocalist **Bobby Ebz** had to undergo open-heart surgery recently following a stabbing incident during early August in New Jersey.

Fortunately, Ebz is now making a good recovery and should be able to resume work on the band's debut album, **'Submit To Genocide'**, very shortly. This will be released by *New Renaissance Records.*

■ THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT of the City Of Edinburgh District Council are to mount an exhibition called **'Disc-Cover'** at the *City Arts Centre*, running from December 13 to January 24. This will feature artwork from record sleeves since 1958 plus a section devoted to memorabilia.

Any fans who have items that might be of interest to the exhibition organisers are invited to contact: **The Recreation Marketing Unit, City Of Edinburgh District Council, 17 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh.** Tel: **031 557 1265.**

■ LANCASHIRE BAND **BVK** have recruited bassist **David Gunning** to replace **Antony Keen**, who has now formed his own group called **Flipper.**

The full BVK line-up is Gunning, **David Jones** (rhythm guitar), **Martin King** (lead guitar) and **David Bradburn** (lead vocals/drums). The foursome are presently working on a demo tape with producer **Jez Clark.**

■ NOTTINGHAM BAND **Deuce** have recruited bassist **Simon Warde** (ex-**Orion**) and lead guitarist **Ken Tilley** (again previously with Orion). The group are currently working on demos for their debut album.

In the meantime, the five-piece have a four-track demo available through *Way Ahead Records* priced at £1.50 (incl. p&p) from the following address: **2 Hurts Yard, Nottingham.**

■ NORTH EASTERN band **Dark Heart** have recruited drummer **Mark Burley** to replace **Dave Hudson.**

■ A NEW specialist monthly magazine for disc jockeys has just been launched called *Jocks.* Copies are on sale now priced at £1.25. Alternatively, subscriptions are available at £18 *per* year from: *Jocks, c/o RM,* Spotlight Publications, Greater London House, London NW1 7QZ.

SAVE THE BEAST

■ A 'SAVE THE BEAST' campaign has been launched in New York to defend singer **Damien 'The Beast' Bardot** (above), formerly with HM band **Alien**, and now of Fort Lauderdale jail, Florida.

Damien is facing a charge of first degree murder and aggravated burglary, but in anguished tones he called me up at the *Kerrang!* office to say: "I didn't do nuthin'. I was framed. It's all a big mistake!"

Damien went to Florida after Alien split up to do some acting in TV movies. That's when his troubles started, and now he faces imprisonment or even the electric chair.

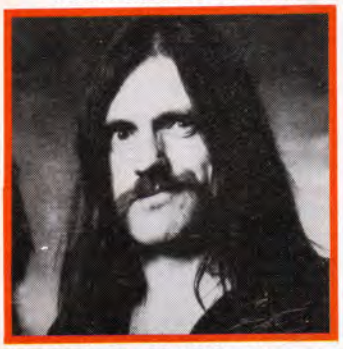
Says Damien: "I had parts in 'Miami Vice' and a movie called 'Band In The Hand'. Everything was going great. Then a guy who used to live in the same apartment block offered me some stereo equipment. I didn't really want it but I bought the stuff, then sold it again. But it turned out the stereo had been stolen from a guy who had been murdered.

"When the police traced the equipment the guy said, 'Damien sold it to me', so I was arrested by armed police at the airport and charged with murder. But I didn't do it. I didn't even know the guy who was murdered. I've been in jail for four months and they won't let me have bail. I need 70,000 dollars to pay for a defence lawyer. I've got some money, but not *that* much! Some friends in the music business are trying to raise the cash for me, with a 'Save The Beast' campaign. And anyone who wants to help should write to: **PO Box 331 Jerico, New York, 11753, USA.**"

CHRIS WELCH

MORE MAYHEM OVER PAGE

GALLUP DEBATE (2)



LEMMY: Are Motörhead treated fairly by the charts?

THE BITTER bust-up over the Gallup chart's alleged bias against rock and Heavy Metal acts hots up this week – with fresh evidence of 'book cooking' on the table. And it's **Tokyo Blade** keyboardist **Sean Cooper** who's putting the knife in.

Cooper, 18, runs HM specialist shop Graffiti Records in Bridlington, not a chart shop but one that's on Gallup's 'check-list' – the back-up panel of non-mainstream stores consulted just once a month in rotation.

Inspired by the lashing **Motörhead**'s bassist/vocalist **Lemmy** and manager **Doug Smith** handed Gallup in Mayhem issue 129, Sean told me: "It was our turn to be consulted the week after **Bon Jovi** crashed into the charts at Number Eight with the '**Slippery When Wet**' album.

"Now, the Bon Jovi album was our biggest seller that week. We sold ten times as many Bon Jovi albums as any other chart contender.

"Yet on the checklist sheet we got from Gallup the album wasn't even mentioned, not even as an extra. So there was no way we could record the sales. I rang Gallup to ask if there was some mistake and the area girl said no, it just wasn't on the computer."

Not surprisingly, 'Slippery When Wet' took an immediate dive on the Gallup chart.

So what can be done?

"Well, I agree with Lemmy that something needs to be changed. But I don't think the Gallup charts actually have an in-built bias against rock, it's more a fault in the system. The way they do it is wrong. The only way to improve it is to make the chart shops, called Data Port shops, more representative. And that means shops like Shades should definitely be a Data Port shop."

GARRY BUSHELL

COMMENTING ON these criticisms and also those mentioned in Mayhem issue 129, Gallup chart manager **Godfrey Rust** has made the following statement:

"At the risk of bringing down the wrath of Lemmy, I'm afraid that on all points raised you're not just wrong, but as misplaced as a centre-page spread on **A-Ha** in your esteemed mag.

"Just seven points to clear up . . .

"First, Garry Bushell has compared the Gallup chart placings for Motörhead's '**Orgasmatron**' album with other published charts, showing Gallup to be 'out of step'. Well, of course it's out of step. The Gallup chart is compiled on Monday-Saturday sales while the others all close their books sometime between Wednesday and Friday!

"New albums all hit the shops on Mondays, so obviously the Gallup chart, with six full days of 'Orgasmatron' sales, gave it a higher placing than those accounting for only three or four days' business.

"Then in the second week, the position drops in Gallup while in the others – having a full week's sales for the first time – it climbs.

"The drop in chart place (from 21 to 41) is normal. Almost without exception rock albums drop in their second week. The heavier the rock, the bigger the drop. In fact, it starts dropping from the very first day of release.

"The reason? Heavy rock fans are the quickest off the mark – but there just aren't enough of them to keep the product at the top.

"Point Two. Garry says that 'Orgasmatron's sales 'Rose by 4000' in the second week. What he means is that sales from the factory into the shops have gone up. In the first few weeks of release, these figures bear little relation to sales over the counter, which is what the chart measures. The reason? The initial 'Sell-in' is always much more than the first week's sales, so inevitably re-orders start off low and climb steadily. Most albums drop down the charts while their re-orders are actually increasing.

"Point Three. Doug Smith blames 'The shops that Gallup use', saying most of them are 'Woolworths and Our Price and that sort of store'. Wrong again. Almost half the Gallup panel is made up of independent record shops – and that's exactly what it should be. Our job is to make sure that all record sales are properly represented, no matter where they take place. Woolworths, for instance, have about 20 per cent of the country's record shops. You may not like it, or the kind of records they sell, but that's the way it is.

"Point Four. Doug remarks that the 'MRIB chart is much more accurate because it is based on more returns'. Well, it isn't either of those things, I'm afraid. Their returns are smaller, less accurate and (this is the main point) unbalanced. It happens to be unbalanced slightly in favour of rock product, so it may be more to Doug's (and Kerrang!'s) taste, but we're dealing in facts, not propaganda.

"I'm not knocking MRIB, Their system for compiling charts is OK – I set it up eight years ago so I know how it's done – if you want a cheap and cheerful chart. But comparing it with the Gallup system is like comparing a Sinclair C5 Trike with the **ZZ Top** car. In the end it's a question of money. Gallup's chart operation turns over at least five times as much as MRIB's, so of course we can do a better job.

GODFREY RUST: "We make no allowances for taste"

"Point Five. Garry says that, 'If rock bands aren't getting their proper place' it's a big injustice. I agree, it would be. But they are getting their proper places. Let's get one thing quite straight. We don't care who is Number One – so long as it's the best-selling record in the country. Motörhead have had a Number One album on the Gallup chart ('**No Sleep Till Hammersmith**'). So have **Iron Maiden**. We make no allowance for taste.

"Point Six. Garry's claim about 'Book-cooking' also grabs the wrong end of the stick. He quotes one of our 'check-shops'. We have over 600 of them, all independents, because we involve as many retailers as far as our budget allows.

"The point of the 'check panel' is to pick up on any records whose sales in the main chart panel are higher than is representative. It's basically a safeguard against 'hype'.

"Each week we check on about 90 records, all of whose sales have been increasing on the main panel. In the case referred to, Bon Jovi's sales were dropping significantly, as with most rock albums in their second week, so there was no need to include it on the checked titles. Of course it was on our computer – it just wasn't needed on the checklist because we were satisfied that our computer returns were accurate. Do you really think we'd just 'forget' a Top 100 album? come on!

"If anyone wants to know the ins and outs of the chart, they should write to me at: **Gallup, 202 Finchley Road, London NW3 6BL.** We've got a booklet which gives you all the mechanics of it. If you can't be bothered or you're not into technicalities, that's fine – but then don't complain if you haven't taken the trouble to find out what you're really complaining about, OK?

"And point Seven: calling it the 'BBC Gallup' chart is a bit off the mark as well. More than half the cost of the chart is paid by the record industry, a much smaller part by the BBC – and the remaining one-third? By none other than Spotlight, the publishers of Kerrang!

"So, please don't send your complaints to us or Auntie Beeb. We would be very happy with a bigger chart panel (in fact we've been nagging the industry to increase it ever since we took over the chart in 1983). You'd be better off just sending them to Spotlight!"

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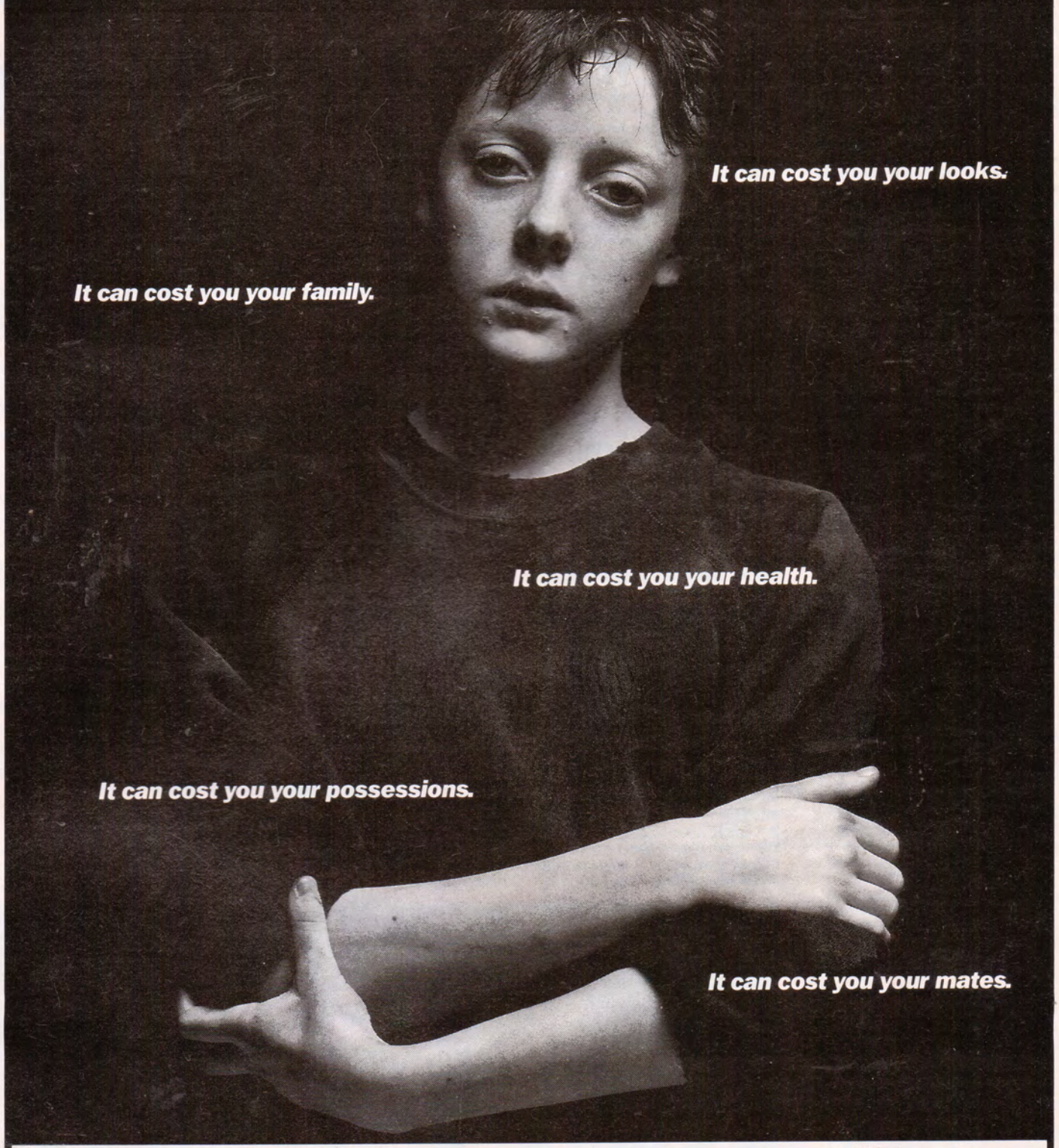
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HEROIN SCREWS YOU UP.

FROM PAGE 4

HYPE. A nasty, infectious bug that has recently grown bigger, badder and stronger, invading most rock bands with damaging side-effects for the fan. After all, anyone who's anyone must surely come pre-packaged with a trip for two to Tokyo, a poster, a patch, an OTT FX video, outrageous lyrics, debauched sleeve and the most murderous of flyposting campaigns. Or so your average Joe is conditioned to think.

Journey's current album, 'Raised On Radio', was released with no trips, no poster, no patch, no OTT FX video and a mediocre advertising campaign. Journey do not touch make-up and don't wear hair lacquer. Just jeans. Just shirts. Just trainers. Not worth bothering about? Wrong.

'Raised On Radio' is now set to go double platinum in the States and will probably hit triple platinum before too long. Yet there were none of the usual Music Biz crutches to help support the album's sales; it sold on the strength of the vinyl alone.

I am not a die-hard Journey expert, but it is obvious to me that they are a huge exception to just about every applicable rule. A 13-year history, performers of rock in its lighter aspect, a stadium supergroup for about the last seven years and a name that is synonymous with AOR, or so it's widely recognised amongst the uneducated . . . any other band with that little lot would get slapped into jail on a charge of fossilisation, found guilty and imprisoned for life to avoid further activity. But Journey simply escape all that. This multi-million dollar phenomenon doesn't even get arrested. While peers such as ZZ Top have sent their style into orbit to keep up with the times, Journey have a style that works, a sound that suits, a relevance that cannot be denied.

The new album is a worthy effort, a record that marries old traditions with new ideas and doesn't bear the slightest fusion scar. Journey have the sounds that hit the nation's ears after only one spin. They really were raised on radio. Which leads a non-expert to ask exactly what makes this whole set-up tick so perfectly? It's Saturday morning in Seattle when I verbally pop the question to Journey keyboardist Jonathan Cain . . .

"WELL, IT'S kinda ironic that you should say that, because things haven't actually been smooth for the last three years. No-one else would have known that, because we don't wash our dirty laundry in public, but we've had a lot of personal and internal problems which built up and came to a head soon after the 'Escape' album/tour three years ago. To everyone at large Journey's always been a Utopia, the band who manage to do everything perfectly, the 100 per cent AOR sweetie-pies of America, but that sort of thing as well as the 'Supergroup' tag can be a hindrance, and it certainly affected us a great deal. I guess we were sort of suffering that 'seven year itch' thing, but it got to the point where we all had to thrash out some points.

"Steve Perry (Journey vocalist) went off to do his solo project, and whilst we were all real proud of his success, it left us feeling insecure, a touch out in the cold. I mean, the problem came down to a lack of communication. Steve had gone off to Los Angeles and wherever to do his thing, and there was this 'marriage' back here that we needed to sort out fast. It all came to a huge head."

Cain's brutally honest revelations didn't just surprise me – they had me choking on my bloody coffee! But I was more surprised at the point at which this all came about. I would have guessed that the HSAS project (Sammy Hagar, pre-Van Halen, on vocals, Neal Schon, Journey guitarist, bassist Kenny Aaronson & drummer Mike Shrieve) would have been more disruptive.

"No, not at all," explains Cain, "because we had all left to do our own little projects and we were quite happy with them being no more than short-term affairs. Whereas it started to become clear that Steve's might be a bit more than that. It took us a long time to communicate properly, to air our differences, for Herbie Herbert, our manager, to confront Steve. We had all assumed too much of each other regarding who was going to contact who; it quickly became one huge misunderstanding!

"Apart from all those band problems, we were also suffering personally with death and divorce, things that no-one ever needs, especially at a time like that. But I'm proud to stand up and say that this family was big enough to talk and resurrect itself from a seemingly dead position."

Of course, the 'family' also had to contend with the departure of drummer Steve Smith and bassist Ross Valory, a subject about which Cain still feels a little cautious.

"We've always felt strong musically, that we had a lot more to achieve in that area. Which is where the problem with Steve and Ross came up, and I'm proud once again to say that we managed to sort that one out properly as well. It had got to the stage where those two had fulfilled their potential in Journey."

AT WHICH point Steve Perry walks into the room, collects a cup of coffee and continues the story . . .

"The group was ready to write new material, the songwriting section that is – basically myself, Neal and Jon. The simple fact was that we were ready to progress, to leap over our next Grand Canyon, whereas Steve and Ross had reached their maximum. They were starting to cancel each other out.

"Steve had already ventured into the jazz scene, and he was obviously enjoying the freedom that he found there. It was becoming clear that he would never quite feel the same in Journey again, that he was never gonna have the freedom he now enjoyed and to some extent needed. It all became clear in the studio – the studio doesn't lie – and it got to the stage where we had to do something about it. I really believe that Steve couldn't see it until right near the end, but Journey demands the fullest attention when work is in progress. Of course, with me having been elected producer, I was the one who had to say it, I was the one who had to tell him from the other side of the console that we wanted to get another drummer to finish the album. And, believe me, it was one of the most difficult things I've had to do in my life."

Needless to say, Smith didn't take events at all well (the Journey rhythm section now features, for the moment at least, crack bassist Randy Jackson, who's played with Eddie Money and Aretha Franklin amongst others, and drummer Mike Baird).

"Steve took the whole thing exactly like I did, with a feeling of devastation, and I think that emotions are still too high for commonsense to prevail – I hear that Steve still hasn't listened to the album. I don't blame him for how he feels, but I want him to know that it hurt us all and that it was a damn hard thing to do. But to keep Journey fresh it had to be done."

"Smitty does play on three tracks on the album," states Cain, "and that whole problem with Steve and Ross helped make 'Raised On Radio' the album that it is. Steve did feed into the album superbly when he was 'up', and 'Eyes Of A Woman' is really his last stand. It's a great number, the best note on which to part. Absolutely every problem we suffered helped make 'Raised On Radio' the great album I believe it is."

AS STATED earlier, 'ROR' is roaring into that familiar multi-platinum area, so what is it that the fans still find in Journey?

"We are a no-nonsense, simple band that plays classic American rock music," announces Perry. "It's not our style to go check out the latest ear candy so the kids can hook up on it, we simply write classic tunes in our own style. People know that we put our all into songs; we even refused to put out a video with the album because no video concept is better than the song, so why bother doing it? We have finally done a video for 'Girl Can't Help It', but it's just live footage of a recent festival. When people buy a Journey record they know it's 100 per cent pure beef."

After the interview, I cab it down to the venue (the Seattle Coliseum) for tonight's show with exuberant manager Herbie and his somewhat quieter assistant John Villaneuva. Herbie takes me on a tour of the stage set-up and the technical arrangements, all of which will lead to production costs of £5 million by the time the tour finishes.

"It's a miracle that all this is happening," says Herbie, "'cause there was a time when it seemed as though Journey had finally reached the end. Thank God it's been sorted out, but this tour may still decide the band's long-term future, so we're sparing no expense."

The last word, however, I'll leave to Jonathan Cain . . . "This tour really is our acid test. As long as things keep on going well, and we continue to enjoy it all, then we'll have no problems, but it's still not 100 per cent certain that Journey will stay together. If I were a betting man, though, I'd say that there's still too much good music left in the band for us to consider a split for some time." STEFFAN CHIRAZI

JOURNEY (l-r, Steve Perry, Jonathan Cain and Neal Schon): and then there were three. . .

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MAGNUM

NOT EXACTLY creatures of the night or dedicated followers of fashion, Magnum are perhaps best described as pastoral country bumpkins with a cracking taste in antiquarian attire – as shown by this pic of guitarist Tony Clarkin (left) and frontman Bob Catley! What's more, after years spent knocking on the door of success they've finally stepped over the threshold to triumphant critical acclaim and the ultimate accolade of watching new album 'Vigilante' (on *Polydor*) slip easily into the national charts. Personally, as a man who's championed their cause since heaven knows when, I regard this big time acclaim as a natural reward for all the hard times and the passionate belief that their music *alone* would eventually win through.

Staunchly refusing to chase after an 'image', Magnum have effectively thrown a rather truculent V-sign towards the accepted method of career development in the Metal field. Why play that game when the 'Vigilante' tour has been such a success?! Undoubtedly their most prestigious and flamboyant stage-show so far, the gigs I've seen have been packed to the rafters with seething fans so dedicated to the Magnum cause that Bob 'chubby cheeks' Catley has literally had to fight for attention above the nightly mass chorus. Flattering or frustrating? Sensibly, Bob reckons it's the former although I'd plump for the latter, silly sod that I am.

On the more factual front, the band are presently engaged in a headlining tour of Europe where 'Vigilante' has been accorded a monumentally positive reponse. From there, plans are being laid for a return to the UK early in '87, headlining a fistful of major venues before venturing to America for the first time since they supported Ozzy Osbourne (then a *Jet* labelmate) Stateside in 1982. This trek will almost certainly entail a long haul supporting a major band with a similar musical style.

On the vinyl front, the recent British release of 'Midnight (You Won't Be Sleeping)' as a single should be followed by the Christmas issue of the swaying, skin-prickling ballad 'When The World Comes Down' as a 45, accompanied by a video, part of which was shot on the last date of the group's recent UK tour at the *Hammersmith Odeon*. Oh, and don't be too surprised if a live rendition of 'The Last Dance' turns up on the B-side.

DEREK OLIVER

Pic Ray Palmer

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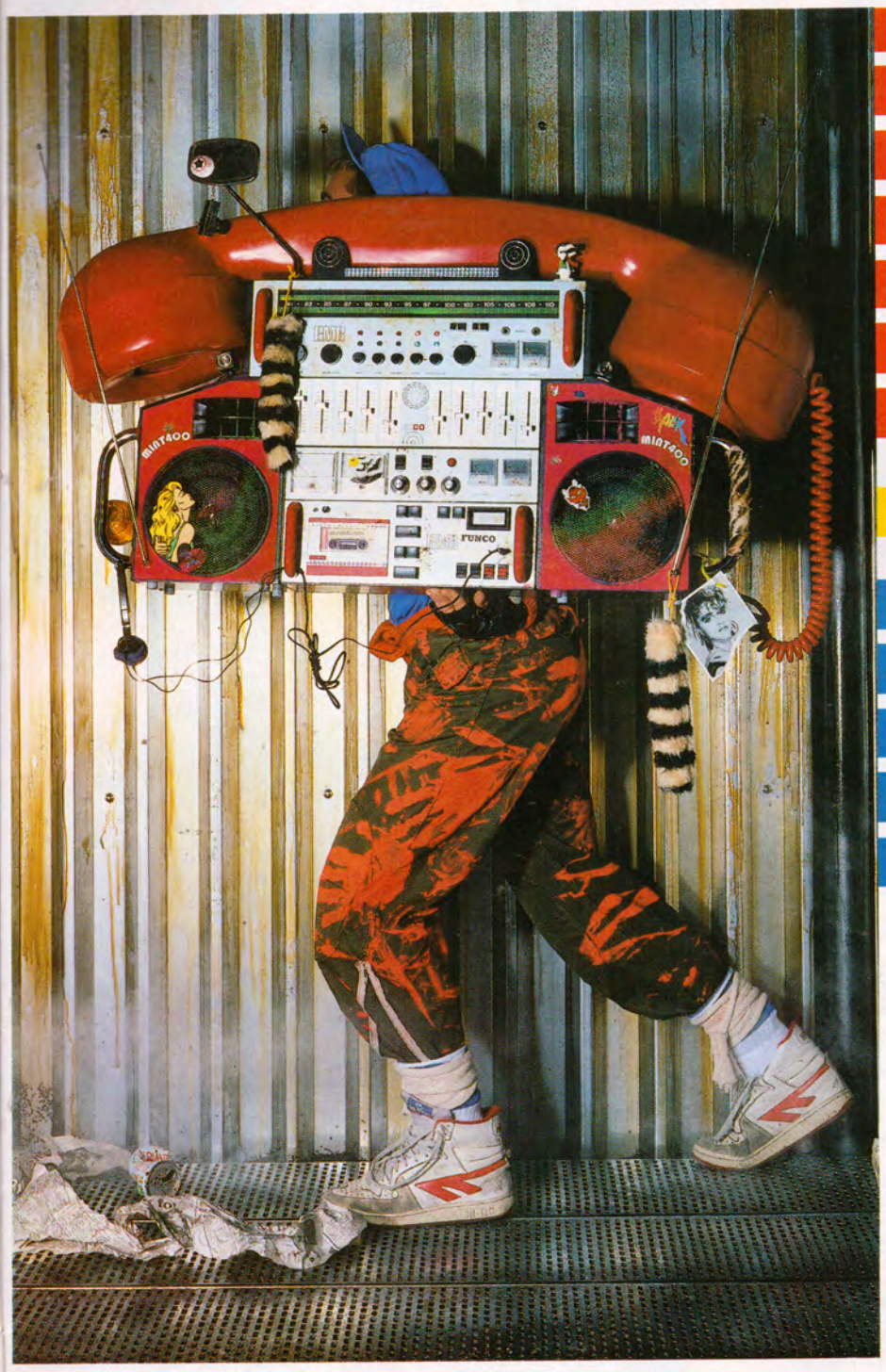

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Hear No Evil

The new GIRLSCHOOL album, 'Nightmare At Maple Cross', may have a tongue-in-cheek terror title, but the record itself, according to HOWARD JOHNSON, is anything but terrible . . . Oh, and the band's KIM McAULIFFE (left) and CHRIS BONACCI agree!

THEY'VE BEEN hailed by some as rock 'n' roll messiahs, been reviled by many as a bunch of silly little girls pretending in a man's world, and been up and down more time than Ted Nugent's drawers, but they're still here, making music and enjoying every last excessive minute of it! This is Girlschool. Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends!

Every band has its ups and downs, that's only natural, part of the game. Yet when Girlschool released the 'Running Wild' album about a year back they reached the lowest point in their already topsy-turvy career.

I reviewed the album in *Kerrang!* and distinctly remember being less than enthusiastic about its contents. It seemed as if all the heart had gone out of the band; 'Goodbye Girl' was the headline and to all intents and purposes it seemed as if that was it, *finito*, end of story.

Ah, but the girls had other ideas. So what if even the band's most fervent supporter, Malcolm Dome, had been lovingly chiselling out a fitting headstone? These lasses were going to dig in their spiked heels, stick up two fingers to the likes of me and Dome, and prove that they still had some serious rocking left in their female bodies!

And wouldya credit it? That's exactly what the band have done! They've stepped back, taken a long, hard, *objective* look at what they're about, and returned to doing what they do best – rocking in a naive, gonzoid, bombastic and thoroughly enjoyable manner!

Some things, of course, don't change. I'm sitting in a London beer garden with vocalist/guitarist Kim McAuliffe and guitarist Chris Bonacci and, believe me, they are suffering!! Another night on the tiles, another set of 'sherberts' too many and the girls are definitely not well! Still, at least Chris has brought along a plastic bag just in case her tired and emotional condition should get the better of her!

We're here to talk product. We're here to talk new Girlschool album, 'Nightmare At Maple Cross', an enjoyable Metallic romp that is far and away the band's finest moment since 'Hit And Run' all those many moons ago. Only Kim and drummer Denise Dufort have braved the storm from then till now and quite a few personages have dropped by the wayside in the meantime. But the band have learnt from their mistakes, finally arriving at what they feel is the most 'them-like' album since 'H&R'. 'Running Wild', they freely admit, was a *big* mistake!

"THERE WERE certain bits about it that we liked at the time," claims Kim, "but, in retrospect, it was totally the wrong album for us to do – it just wasn't us. It was s**t and we don't wanna talk about it!" she laughs.

Oh, but we must. It was the band's one and only release for *Phonogram/Mercury*, who actually signed them to an American deal in New York!

"That was the problem in a nutshell'" claims Chris. "Because we were signed to an American label there was a certain amount of pressure exerted on us to sound more American. And we definitely had the wrong producer in Nick Tauber. He's a lovely bloke, but he'd be better off producing pensioner-type band," she giggles, realising that she might have put her foot in it once more. But then again, that's Girlschool all over, isn't it? Nice an' uncalculating.

"When we listen to other people, when we take in outside opinions, things never seem to work out," Chris continues. "We just can't operate that way."

Exactly right. When Girlschool get back to basics and please themselves they undoubtedly produce their best music. Take 'Nightmare At Maple Cross'. . .

"We went into the studio this time with the express intention of pleasing ourselves first and foremost because I think it comes over in the grooves when a band is having fun and being honest in the music that it's making. It was just a question of going in and doing what we do best, going back to basics."

In every imaginable way. Not only have Girlschool returned to their original studio haunt, *Jackson's*, they've also re-established contact with that reliable old warhorse Vic Maile, who worked on the first brace of Girlschool LPs and handles production duties on the new album . . .

"*Jackson's* is just about the least flash studio you can get," says Kim, "but as far as we're concerned it's got a great feel to it. Vic won't record anywhere else actually, and besides, flash studios aren't necessarily the best. Vic just loves to get on with the job there; there's no tape op. or engineer, he does the whole lot himself – and it really works!"

And, of course, the gals have gone back to basics in their line-up too. Gone is the five-piece troupe featuring Jackie Bodimead on vocals; Kim is now back at the mike stand. Personally, I can't see why the girls veered away from that approach in the first place. Following the departure of Kelly Johnson, it was Kim's strong, raunchy vocals and her sexuality that became the focal point of Girlschool, the fantasy of many a teenage Metal merchant (and probably quite a few older ones!).

Why on earth did you neglect this particular asset?

"I can't really say," replies Kim, hardly surprisingly. "We just felt that it was time for a change, for a fresh approach. The fact that things didn't work out is just too bad. We didn't know what we wanted and we hope it's not too late for us now."

What happened with Jackie?

"Oh, it was all pretty amicable," says Kim. "We were rehearsing one day, she said she wanted to leave and we said OK. It was as simple as that. She was definitely into a more AOR-ish sound and it was good that she wanted to leave, because it would have been very difficult to say that we were *sacking* her!!

"We knew that we'd done the right thing when we went out on the Blue Öyster Cult UK tour directly after the split. It felt so good to be back to a four-piece again (the line-up being completed by bassist Gil Weston-Jones) cos I'd never felt comfortable not singing, and people were coming up to us and saying that it was brilliant, just how it used to be!"

Fine 'n' dandy, cool 'n' groovy, but don't you feel that you're going right back to square one again? All that wasted energy!

"It *is* back to square one again," says Kim, "but that's *exactly* what's good about it! It's great, it's exciting! I'm not pissed off at all. After all, what else can we do? Go on the dole? Work in a shop? I'm always really pleased that people actually think enough of us to put the money up each time to let us make the next record! I'm really proud that Denise and I have managed to keep this thing together for eight years. Wouldn't it be great if we could get through to a tenth anniversary?"

SURE WOULD, and with the release of 'Nightmare At Maple Cross' the prospects of Girlschool reaching that hallowed goal seem to be ever improving. The *Phonogram* deal and the 'Running Wild' album ("I don't remember that one" – Chris) are now just a dim, distant blot on the copybook, and with the *GWR* label (also home of Motörhead) more than happy to pump out their product things should work out very nicely thank you. Money? Who needs it, anyway?

"We haven't made any money in eight years," laughs Kim, "so I don't really see things turning 'round now – not that we wouldn't like them to! I doubt if this album will sell any more than our previous releases have done and I'm sure it won't sell a bean in the States because it's just not the kind of thing they go for. It's frustrating in a way but then again I'm not surprised by it. After all, what parents in their right mind are going to go out and buy 'Nightmare At Maple Cross' for their kids this Christmas?!"

But there are certainly other advantages to being a Galschooler. Job satisfaction for one . . .

"It's amazing the amount of people from school who I keep in touch with and who are really envious of what I'm doing," says Kim. "They're really proud of me and they always say that they'd love to do the same but they can't. They say, 'You must have a great time!' to which I reply, 'Yeah I do, it's a brilliant life!'"

But let's get back to the album, 'Nightmare At Maple Cross'. As I've already stated, it's the best Girlschool LP in a mighty long time, bubbling over with enthusiasm, silliness and a general gung-ho party attitude. It all has that 1970s *'Top Of The Pops'* feel, all Slade, Mud, Gary Glitter and Bolan, saying nothing but doing all kindsa things to your less cerebral areas. Just to prove the point, the gals have included an up-tempo, up 'n' at 'em cover of Mud's 'Tiger Feet'.

"It was a really strange coincidence," recalls Kim, "but we were in the studio watching videos of all those Seventies bands and when 'Tiger Feet' came on we all jumped up and said that we had to do a cover of it. So I told Vic Maile about the idea and he produced this piece of paper. There were three tracks listed on it which he thought were possible covers for us, and top of the list was 'Tiger Feet'. We were obviously fated to do it!"

THERE WAS also the possibility that 'Leader Of The Gang' (the last Girlschool single featuring Gary Glitter himself) might make the record, but that idea was shelved at the last minute, overkill on the covers being cited as the reason behind its omission. Nonetheless, the girls are very happy with the new LP . . .

"It's brilliant," says a particularly modest Kim, "I actually listen to it all the time which I would never have done with, say, 'Running Wild'. It's a really great record to put on when you're getting ready to go out at night. There's virtually nothing in the charts that can make you feel good any more. There's a real lack of rock 'n' roll."

And it's jolly pleasing to see Girlschool back and giving it their best shot in the name of this particular game. It's in their blood, y'see – rock 'n' roll and that ol' Devil Juice just can't be denied!

"I do get worried about my liver sometimes," confesses Kim," I mean I've had to give up spirits. Kelly Johnson (now resident in Los Angeles) and I used to have some incredible drinking bouts. But those days are behind us now. More rock 'n' roll, that's what you need. And I'm getting thirsty! What are you having?"

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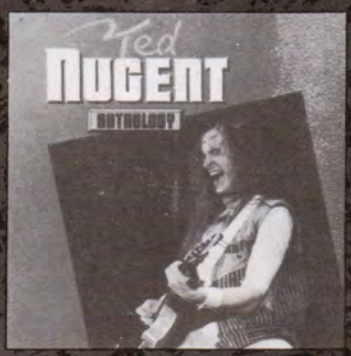

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FROM LADYKILLERS to . . . MANEATERS! First to strip off, Dumpy Dunnell, Number One in an ongoing series (and, yes, that is a threat!)

SECURITY KNOCKS

THIS IS a very serious and sad plea for help. Something *must* be done before an innocent rock music fan is killed at a concert.

I work as a Customs Officer and have been to see hundreds of bands – mostly Metal. I have attended disruptive football matches and watched the news on TV; I KNOW WHAT VIOLENCE IS AND I DEPLORE IT!

With regard to the Motörhead/ Zodiac Mindwarp concert at the *Hammersmith Odeon* on the 22/ 9/86, everyone was having a good time but the audience was a little laid-back by Motörhead standards. When the band hit the stage, everyone started jumping up and down, maybe putting one foot in the aisle, maybe trying to get down to the front for a closer look, but the security people didn't like this and started pushing and punching.

A few people next to me started to run down the aisle and four security persons tried to stop them. Then a scuffle took place in which one security person held a fan by the throat and pushed him into his seat while another continually punched the helpless fan in the face. A girl tried to hold the security person back but was punched in the face by one of his 'colleagues'. An attempt was made to drag the fan away, at which point the same security person started kicking him in the body.

Another security guard realised something was wrong and pulled off the 'madman'; he turned around with a flick-knife in his hand, then nervously put it back inside his jacket.

I'm sorry this letter is long – but it *is* IMPORTANT!

If fans make the mistake of carrying knives as well (self-defence), then sooner or later there is going to be an almighty PMRC-type ban on Heavy Metal as a result of someone dying at one of our concerts – especially when the media gets on to it. **B.C. Baldock, Essex.**

PS. If the *Odeon*'s answer is that keeping people out of the aisles is necessary due to fire precautions, *then read on. Just after this* incident, a security person, trying his best to chat up a couple of tarts, asked them if they'd like to get closer. They were told to stand in the aisles nearer the front, but when a bloke tries to, he gets his face *rearranged!*

THE GIRL BEHIND THE MASQ

I JUST had to write and tell you about RLS (the female lead guitarist with Masquerade X), whose letter was printed in issue 129. Having known her for the last five years, I can truthfully say that I have never read so much rubbish in my life.

Having said that, though, I *do* agree with what she says about probably only being in the band because of her romantic involvement with the bassist!

Don't get me wrong, I think that having females in an HM band is very good. I am also in a band with a female guitarist who is progressing steadily and doesn't swing her tits around.

We played a gig with Masquerade X about two months ago and RLS wore very little, posed, wiggled her ass and screamed "NOBTHROB!" down the mike. Does this sound like the same girl who sent you the letter? Enough said, eh?!

So come on boys, don't slag-off female HM/HR guitarists until you've seen them live. **Glenn, the Ozzy lover and vocalist with Tarro, Sheffield.**

PERFECT TIMING

THIS LETTER *has* to be read – not just by *Kerrang*sters, but by the whole world!

I defy anyone in the music business to listen to the new Iron Maiden album 'Somewhere In Time' a few times and say they don't like it.

This LP should be forced upon people who slag-off Heavy Metal. I've heard the record three times now and every track's a bloody miracle.

I *had* to write. I *have* to be heard.

The most advanced computers couldn't come up with better lyrics and better use of instruments.

I've said enough. I'm insane. **Paul (if only people would listen, Maiden would rule the world), Somewhere In Codsall, Wolv'ton.**

FLESH FOR FANTASY (1)

AS A recent konvert to the *Kerrang!* Klub I'm bound to say that a regular dose of manly flesh would be very welcome! Like you, I turned the pages of *Playgirl* with bated breath. What a disappointment! I'm sure *Kerrang!* could do better than those koy, kovered bodies and I for one would like to see it all hanging out in *Kerrang!*.

Top of my list would be: Jon Bon Jovi, James Hetfield and Bruce Dickinson. Let's see who the *real men* are. How about it *Kerrang!*? **Janice Coburn, Hull.**

FLESH FOR FANTASY (2)

I'D LIKE to second the motion put forward by Flossy (issue 129) on the subject of male flesh, and more importantly, that of WASP's Blackie Lawless. I reckon most ladies would agree that Blackie and Jon Bon Jovi are top of the list. Male flesh please and LOTS OF IT!!! **Rosie, Alton, Hants.**

Pic Ray Palmer

MEN WITHOUT SHAME

'Oppressive organisations' like the PMRC may have done their best/worst to sweep WASP from the face of the planet, but the LA outfit continue to thrive – unrepentant of past excesses and seeking to expand their appeal in the future. Will new album 'Inside The Electric Circus' do it for them? DANTE BONUTTO chews over the facts (quite literally!) with mainman BLACKIE LAWLESS

WHAT DO you ask the man who does 400 interviews a year? Where did you go for your holidays? Who would you most like to be stuck in a lift with? (A Trappist monk, probably!) Or what sort of range have you got with your flame-throwing, *diamanté*-crusted codpiece? In this case, the latter question would certainly be a distinct possibility, though as we've agreed to meet at London's fashionable *Langan's* restaurant, WASP mainman Blackie Lawless and myself, I guess who's gonna pick up the tab might be *most* appropriate!

Actually, gentlemen that we are, we leave that honour to Terri N. Berg, linchpin of the Smallwood Taylor World Domination/Home Rule For Huddersfield/Yard Of Ale Drinkers Group Ltd. (also WASP & Iron Maiden's management company), and focus our attention on the matter at hand. OK, that's another scotch'n'coke for me and a double vodka'n'pineapple for the guy with his head in the chandelier and his elbow in next table's *pâté*. And then . . . The Interview.

But first, a quick word from our fashion correspondent . . . *'For this most formal of occasions, Blackie is wearing a two-piece black leather* ensemble, *with matching tie and white shirt. What we call the "Society Rock Star" look, ideal for driving expensive, preferably uninsured cars into suitably sized swimming pools . . .*

Right. The Interview.

But first . . . Blackie has a theory about interviews. He reckons he can pretty much say all that needs to be said on *strictly* relevant topics in 20 minutes, give or take, and that anything beyond that often amounts to no more than chit-chat, journalists entertaining themselves by gleaning the Lawless stance on all manner of burning issues, from politics through to sport. I remember once doing a real endurance-test interview with the man, the three of us (Blackie, myself and tape machine) retiring to a small, unfurnished room in manager Rod Smallwood's Los Angeles lair and not emerging again until every avenue of useful debate had been exhausted, black magic, boxing, the lot. I mean, did you know that Blackie used to walk out with a witch? No? But let's not get into that here. The Interview, right? Time to cut the waffle and make with the fax. These are as follows:

LA four-piece WASP release third album on *Capitol Records*. Stop. Title: 'Inside The Electric Circus'. Stop. Includes recent single '95-Nasty'. Stop. Sleeve features naked shot of frontman Blackie Lawless. Stop. Album produced by Blackie. Stop. . . STOP!! I can't stand it any more. I know we've had complaints about all the peripheral piffle included in *Kerrang!*'s on-the-road-under-the-table stories; how the journalist got up in the morning, how he got to the airport, how he had to pay excess baggage on his liver, all that stuff. So let me get it off my chest here an' now, then we can proceed with The Interview. Remember that?

So we're in Hawaii, right? 38 nights hotel, all extras paid, mini-bars bursting at the seams, lying in the back of a limo on our way to the gig, popping champagne corks and flicking ice-cubes at the chauffeur's left ear . . .

"Uh, what band are we here to see?" sez Halfin, belching gently into the diamond-studded ear of the sweet young blonde entwined around his arm.

"I don't know," I reply, "stop asking stupid questions!"

"Well, 'ooever it is, right, I don't care if they only let me photograph one number of the show, I want the whole *of the party afterwards or I walk, right?!"*

Enough. The Interview, I promise.

Blackie pierces a sausage with all the delicacy of a man used to sampling fresh 'blood' from a skull, somewhere in the distance a waiter collapses 'neath a pile of soiled china and – wait for it, wait for it – I pose my opening question . . .

"OH, FROM HERE to that wall over there." He indicates a point some 20 feet away. "That was one of the things that aggravated me with the *BBC*." (Brief word of explanation: we're back to the codpiece question here and the *BBC* reference concerns the recent 'Rock Around The Clock' TV extravaganza in which WASP were granted a half-hour segment, filmed live at the Kentish Town *Town & Country Club* in North London. Now read on . . .)

"I mean, didn't you find it odd that at the end of 'Blind In Texas' it just . . . *left!* Well, it was all to do with the codpiece. We showed it to the *BBC* earlier in the day and they said go ahead and use it, but then somebody decided that they didn't want to take the risk of it not being suitable for family viewing, so they cut us off early. It really pissed me off!"

However, you *will* be able to see the Lawless codpiece firing (hopefully not *back*firing!) in all its glory on the band's current UK tour, which runs through until November 8. You'll also get the full unexpurgated brunt of updated costumes and a brand new three-level stage-set featuring cages an' trampolines and likened by Blackie to a "retarded amusement park", all tying in with the 'Electric Circus' theme of the album.

Of course, we're not talkin' big top circus here, we're talkin' *rock 'n' roll* circus. A (gulp) concept album, perchance?

"Well, it didn't start out that way but that's how it ended up." Blackie dabs his lips with a serviette, looking like a lion whose just digested his tamer's leg. "The whole record is about *our* point of view. It all started with the title. I'd had the idea for about two weeks and I was waiting to see what Rod thought about it; I asked him while we were sitting in a bar on our way to Japan and I saw the light go off in his head as soon as I said it! I did have two or three other ideas, but we decided there and then that that would be it."

One of those ideas, it seems, sprung from the song 'Widowmaker', for my money the highlight of the band's second and underrated LP, 'The Last Command'.

Who *is* this Widowmaker? Well, he's over six feet, wears a tall hat, has a patch over his right eye and . . . appears on the cover of *Kerrang!* 132 with the furry friend of his choice. Something of a character change for Blackie, as you'll see for yourself when WASP take the stage . . .

"Actually, I experimented with this character in America," he says, "and only two photographs leaked out to the magazines. I was really insistent about photographers not taking pictures during that part of the show because I wanted to save the look for the cover of the new album. But when we came up with the circus idea it didn't fit, so . . ."

So it found a fitting home on the kover of *Kerrang!*, and very nice too, say I. But back to the album . . .

As already mentioned, the 'Circus' in question is a rock'n'roll circus, the smell of the dry-ice, the roar of the crowd, or in this context the *'animals'* who, as the title track informs us, are *'all insane, God help us!'*

"It's what we see when we stand up there onstage and look out," explains Blackie," though as I wrote the song it became clear that it could be thought of as dealing with more than just rock'n'roll. It could be political as well – about the world situation. *'A scream unlocks the cage, the roars rock the stage'*, I mean, that could be a political platform too . . . On the surface, though, it's pretty self-explanatory."

But what about the band? Are they *'animals'* too? Possibly, though I reckon *'Ringmasters'* might be a better description: controlling events, enticing the audience, piling up the atmosphere . . . and, of course, back in the early days of WASP, before the disappearance of the dots between the letters and the general streamlining of the image, they would take great delight in 'feeding' their *'animal'* throng, hurling great chunks of meat at those with the reddest eyes and whitest teeth. They've stopped all that now but the 'compliment' continues to be returned – in style!

"We had a dog's brain thrown onstage in Florida," says Blackie, unaware that the next table have suddenly decided to forego a sweet. "You could tell it was a dog's brain because the nose was elongated, and it was freshly cut too – none of that frozen stuff for us!

"We also had a moose hindquarter thrown up and the damn thing was as big as me! I don't know how they managed it, or how they got it into the show. They must have put a hat and coat on it and walked it in – it was amazing! Oh, and there was a hog's head, too . . ."

And all in addition to the usual selection of ladies' *lingerie*, flying in greater force and number now that the rough edges of the band have been smoothed down a little. Indeed, in certain quarters His Blackness is now, I suspect, regarded as 'cute'! It can happen to the best of us . . .

"We played New Orleans last Summer and so many bras were tossed up at us that when we tied them all together the line stretched from one side of the stage to the other – *literally!* We started using it as a jump-rope!"

BLACKIE IS certainly not upset about the fact that the audience for WASP has expanded over the last year or so, but he *is* inclined to wonder just how many of this ever-expanding following are concerned with what he has to say beyond superficial show-time patter. He works just as hard on his lyrics as anything else he does, but "the fans never seem to appreciate them as I do. I could be wrong, but I really don't think people *understand* the lyrics. I told the other guys before we started this record that I wasn't going to spend the painstaking hours labouring over the lyrics that I have done before; I tried to throw down a bunch of shit, but once I got into the project I just couldn't do it."

Fresh off the road after five-six months, going out with the likes of Kiss and Black Sabbath, the energy and the experiences still buzzing around inside his head, Blackie had no trouble finding subject matter to fuel his carefully chosen words – the result being perhaps his *clearest* set of lyrics to date. Certainly, people should have no trouble latching onto a song like 'Restless Gypsy', in my opinion the finest WASP number to date, topping even the band's debut 'Animal

(F**k Like A Beast)' 45, something inspired incidentally by a photograph of two lions mating. The imagery there was pretty graphic, and so it is with '. . . Gypsy'.

'No, holding me is like taming the seven seas', a line from the song, conjures up a whole carnival of colour in my head, but Blackie seems to favour another snippet: *'I feel her heat, the desert sun burning skin . . .'* again very graphic, bringing back personal pleasant memories of the 'Blind In Texas' video, shot on an old movie lot in Tucson, Arizona.

Perhaps it's just the little boy attraction of cowboys and indians, Blackie isn't sure, but the desert and the indian folklore and the lifestyle down there had a profound effect on his outlook; feathers an' fringes suddenly started to sprout forth from his stage clothes, and he plans to buy a ranch-style house in Los Angeles as soon as time allows. '. . . *the desert sun, burning skin* . . .' the sort of line that puts you in the mood for something long and cool and liquid . . .

Some lyric writers, the *best* lyric writers, have the ability to spark off a whole chain of thoughts with just a single, often deceptively simple phrase. Pete Townshend can do it (*'I'm gonna run till my feet are raw'* is one of his that still stays with Blackie) and so could Lennon, particularly on a bitch-trip, and they're the people Blackie has learnt from. Maybe they aren't fully understood either, who knows, but at least the Dark One can use his 400 interviews to set the record straight as far as *he's* concerned, though chances are he won't have to do too much explaining when it comes to 'I'm Alive'.

Another track on the new album, it has a short preface before the lyrics. *'This song is dedicated to oppressive organisations worldwide whoever they may be'* is what it says, and according to Blackie, "it's the only time I've ever taken a personal gripe and written about it. I came home one night and some guy on the TV was thumping his Bible and telling everybody what a bad guy I was. That was the last song that went on the album; I just happened to be in a particulary cranky mood and I thought, 'That's it, f**k these guys, I'm gonna show 'em all!' " he laughs. "Like that's really gonna change the future of the world! But it made me feel better at the time . . ."

And talking of 'oppressive organisations', let's welcome the notorious, not to mention ridiculous, PMRC to the conversation, that self-appointed, self-congratulatory body (minus brain) who continue to give the likes of WASP as hard a time as they can. Joke they may be, but they still succeeded in getting the group banned from Las Vegas.

"I really found that incredibly hard to believe," says Blackie, unamused. "Here's a place where prostitution is legal, a ten-year-old can gamble if he or she's got the money, the Sodom & Gomorrah of the western hemisphere, and they won't let WASP play there! They said we were a bad influence on young people. Hypocrisy is not the word for that, there's *no* word to describe that!"

STILL, DESPITE the attentions of the PMRC, the ' . . . Electric Circus' LP is now with us, and a good thing too. Eleven-and-a-half numbers (the half being the short intro piece), a real carnal carnival of delight and in many ways a more logical follow-up to the first self-titled WASP album than the ultra-ambitious ' . . . Command'.

Mick Wall got it right in his review last issue. Record Number One was WASP showing the brash, energetic side of their nature, a bold if somewhat crude slap in the face announcing to the world that they had *arrived*, codpiece and leopard-skin stilettos well to the fore. Then came 'The Last Command', produced by Spencer Proffer and representing a lunar leap forward. Ideas spiralled around from speaker to speaker, Blackie sang like a demon with a three-headed dog snapping at his tail; there was big drums and even bigger vocals, there was imagination, there was (gasp) creativity, a genuine attempt to do something fresh and original within the hoop-bound HM format . . . it was just a shame that in this brave new whirl the guitars, and hence the energy, the *balls* if you will, were somewhat lost in favour of the synthesiser and the sitar.

Without even realising it, WASP had made their *fourth* album rather than their second, a move which rather confounded their original audience and came a little too early in their career to break them into a wider market. Some of us understood and doffed our quills to the intention; others, of course, hadn't a clue, but despite some inconsistencies in the material I have no hesitation in citing ' . . . Command' as a fine album. Some day it will be recognised as such.

On ' . . . Circus' we find WASP playing a safer hand, recapturing all their original energy and keeping things more down-the-line, so to speak. In terms of the actual recording *process*, 'simple' is the last word that springs to mind; two of the songs make full use of 56 tracks, producer Blackie pouring on the power with guitar upon guitar upon guitar, *etc*, and the two weeks of mixing (handled by Michael Wagener) ate up some 32,000 dollars, but the final product is certainly a lot 'cleaner' than its predecessor, easier to get a handle on first time through. In culinary terms, one third of the pie is for the band (serving to satisfy artistic hunger) and the other two-thirds for the public, who should have no trouble digesting every last crumb'n'morsel. Seconds anyone?

Particularly tasty (OK, the cooking puns end here) are the two cover versions, Humble Pie's 'I Donut Need No Doctor' (sorry, last one!) and 'Easy Living', the old Uriah Heep number, originally recorded as B-sides but coming through with such grace and style that Blackie could do nothing else but include them on the album. Indeed, ' . . . Doctor' will be the first *worldwide* single release, though in the UK, of course, we've already had the pleasure of '95-Nasty', all about a

KONTINUEZ OVER

Pic Ray Palmer

WASP (Men Without Shades – completely wrong but a fine caption nonetheless): From the left, Steve Riley, Chris 'Too Tall' Holmes, Blackie Lawless and Johnny 'Hot' Rod

MEN

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

woman taking advantage of a man, with the title referring to a telephone number in case you hadn't guessed.

Actually, it's rather strange to hear Blackie singing lines like: *'I'm yours to do with what you please'* as he's not exactly known for letting females take the upper hand – at least not if *Hustler* magazine is to be believed; specifically, a story which appeared some time ago describing how Blackie and accomplice Nikki Sixx from Mötley Crüe had terrorised a grou . . . young lady with a chainsaw.

Blackie scoffs. "No, no, no, it wasn't a chainsaw, . . . it was an *electric drill!*"

I see.

"But they didn't tell you what she did to *me*. I forget what I was doing but I was bent over and my T-shirt had hiked up at the back. She went, 'Ooh, bare skin!' and just slapped the shit out of me. She was drunk and she really hit me hard. Anyway, I had this long extension chord, about 50 or 60 feet of it, and I just started unravelling it very quietly, nobody was saying anything in the room – there was Nikki, myself and these two girls. 'What are you doing?' said the one who'd hit me, but I didn't say a word, I just kept on unravelling the cord; the silence was killing her, I guess she thought I was going to tie her up.

"I went into the kitchen and hooked up the extension cable to the drill, then I came back out and turned it on – you know what a distinctive sound that thing makes. I got her in a corner, put my hand around her throat, held the drill to her head and said: 'If you ever even *think* about touching me again, I'm gonna put this right through your forehead'. But I wasn't *really* gonna hurt her, I was just making my point. It was definitely provoked. I've only hit two women in my life and that's because they were trying to hurt me – one of them was coming after me with a butcher's knife – so I was trying to defend myself."

'INSIDE THE Electric Circus', to return to the subject at hand, was the first WASP album to be recorded without the services of guitarist Randy Piper, who left following the band's American tour to link up with Alice Cooper (whether he's still associated with Alice is currently open to question). Apparently, though, it was already clear halfway through the tour that the split would be taking place. Says Blackie:

"I don't know if he lost enthusiasm but it just wasn't working any more. The band was becoming stagnant onstage and everybody was grumbling . . . I've known Randy for eight years and he was always real independent, very hard to get close to. When Steve (Riley, drummer), Chris (Holmes, guitarist) and myself would get together everything happened very quickly, but to him it seemed to come harder.

"When a band begins to progress it really separates the men from the boys; we started going this way and he started going the other way, or maybe he stayed where he was and we went somewhere else. It just didn't feel like a band anymore."

So was it easier to record the new album without him?

"No, because he was never there anyway. Chris and I did the bulk of the guitar work on the first two LPs, and not many people know that; the only things he did were some solos. He just didn't have the expertise to play tightly *and* quickly; Chris and I could do it in a fifth of the time."

With Randy gone, the Big Question loomed: should the band recruit a new guitarist or should Blackie switch to rhythm guitar (his original instrument) and pass on the bass duties to fresh blood? For the Lawman, the decision was clear, and after a brief consultation with Rod he grabbed hold of those two extra strings with a vengeance, "a fish back into water", at the same time beckoning former King Kobra bassist Johnny Rod into the ranks (his replacement in KK is Lonnie Vencint). The move allows Blackie to take *full* advantage of his rapport with 'Too Tall' Holmes, and with his right hand no longer tied in position he can put more effort into both performance and vocals, ably assisted in the latter department by the animated Mr Rod.

"When we did 'Fistful Of Diamonds' at rehearsals he stood there toe-to-toe with me and sang the song. No bullshit! To tell you the truth, I'm still finding out things about him, he has a greater repertoire of musical ability than I thought he had. I'm a Beatles fanatic, right? I'll sit around playing obscure Beatles songs and he'll just start playing right along. It's amazing! He's a psychopath in a certain kinda way . . ."

Of course.

". . . but he's got almost total recall and he's incredibly bright."

BLACKIE RECKONS it'll take new boy Rod some six months to acclimatize himself to the extra heat of the WASP camp, and a busy six months they look like being. After the UK tour, the band head off into Europe to support Iron Maiden, then it's back over to the States for another five-month trek, followed by Japan, after which it'll be time to set to work on a new LP. It can be a vicious circle, one that's often hard to break, but Blackie's smart enough to know that you can't ride this rock'n'roll (crazy) train forever; there comes a time when you have to move on and he's already laying the groundwork for when that moment finally comes.

Maybe he'll immerse himself more in the production side, already having half an eye at least on German outfit Warlock and particularly female vocalist Dorothee Pesch who he cites quite unequivocally as "The best singer I've heard in my life!" Certainly, it's no mere coincidence that Warlock are on the bill with WASP in the UK.

Or maybe he'll follow Kiss' Gene Simmons into the acting world; a distinct possibility as WASP have now set up a production company specifically designed to intercept scripts, and Blackie has had some interesting offers pushed his way in the past. He turned down a part in '48 Hours', for example, and due to band commitments was unable to play the 'rock star' role in 'Trick Or Treat', the Dino De Laurentiis movie also starring Gene Simmons and Ozzy Osbourne. Both of these decisions he fears he will live to regret . . .

Still, for the moment he's very much a part of the rock'n'roll world, girding himself for his one-and-a-bit interviews *per* day. It's a major commitment, the reason why the other three members of the band are currently involved in relationships and he isn't, but that's the price you pay when you aren't prepared to loosen your grip, to have it any other way . . .

"Oh, I'd be afraid to ," he gasps, "I couldn't rest. Put Chris Holmes at the helm of the Queen Mary and tell me you'd go to sleep!!"

BLACKIE & JOHNNY: United by a love of obscure Beatles' numbers

WARLOCK

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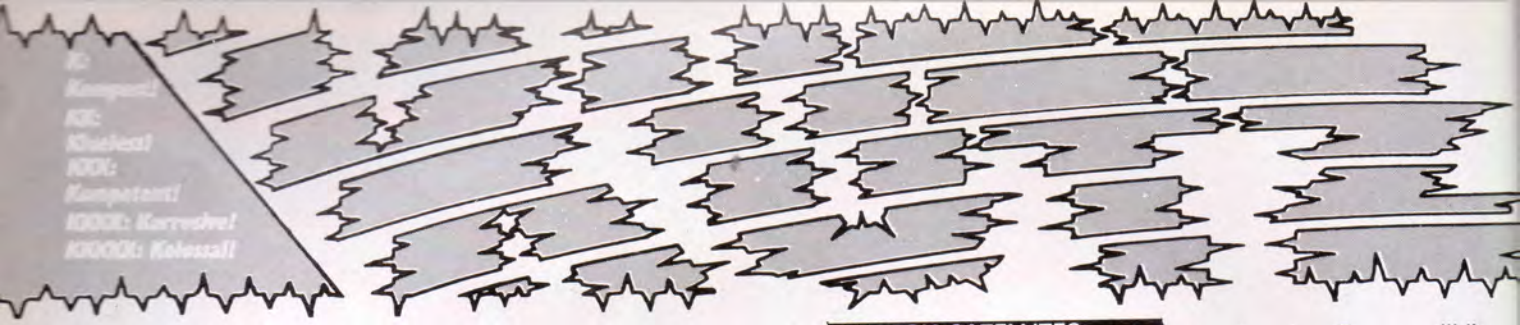


BILLY SQUIER
'Enough Is Enough'
(Capitol EST 2024)
KKKK½

YOU SHOULD know by now not to expect too much in the originality stakes from Billy Squier. He's a chap who patently believes; believes in the quality of his judgement and the quality of his music. It's not AOR, it's not Heavy Metal, but it *is* distinctively Billy Squier.

'Enough Is Enough' proves that enough *isn't* enough for our Billy. He's still trotting out his Big Rock with heart on the line and head a-poundin' to the beat, still loving it and, amazingly, still producing highly listenable records.

Having gone through the experience of having Jim Steinman at the production helm (not a pleasant one – just ask Def Leppard!), Billy seems to have found the ideal man for the job in Peter Collins. Collins did a fine job for Gary Moore and comes up trumps again with Squier (though there was talk of the two not exactly seeing eye-to-eye towards the end of the project). The style here is hi-tech gloss yet with feel and emotion still well in evidence. When the two sides of the coin sit together harmoniously, the results can be good . . . *this* good!

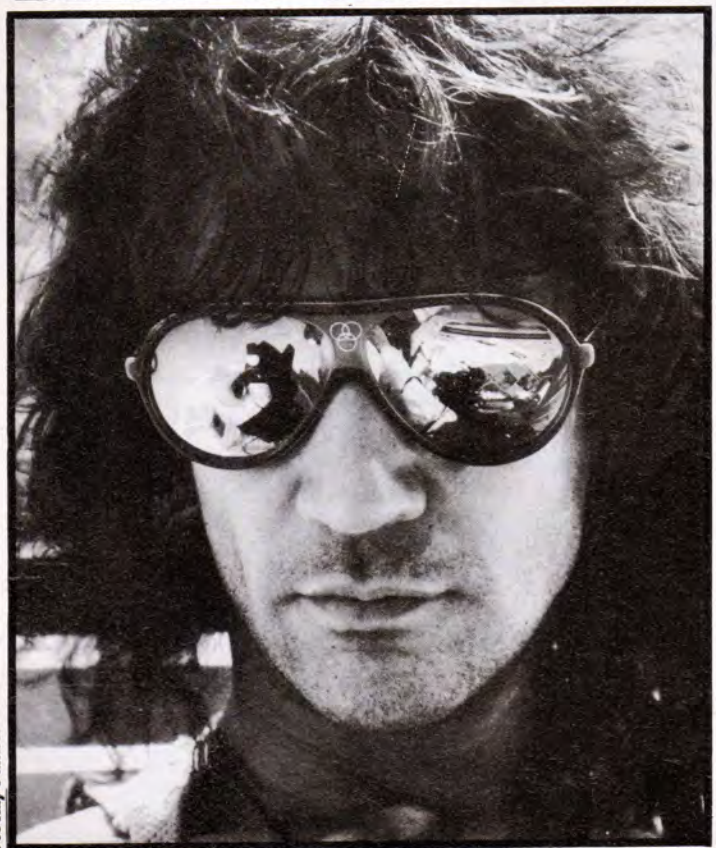
Squier albums always feel like albums, taut and cohesive rather than a vehicle to express simply one or two classic moments. He's a real artist this Squier guy, a value for money merchant and definitely not a *poseur!* There's something to recommend in just about every moment of 'Enough Is Enough', all aided by the *sound* of the disc, but let me pull out three goodies that really show the class of the man.

Firstly, there's 'Love Is The Hero', classic Squier spiced up with some brilliant backing vocals from Queen of pop Freddie Mercury (one of 'em *had* to pop up somewhere!), a chest-beating song of self-assertion and an exhortation of love. 'Lonely One' again shows Billy's best side, simply a fine piece of melodic rock that never once sounds homogenised. Finally, there's the inspirational 'Til It's Over', overblown to be sure yet avoiding pomposity all down the line. Imagine the best moments of Zeppelin and Queen brought together in six memorable minutes and you won't be too far wide of the mark!

Probably Squier's finest moment to date and nice to see that honest-to-goodness rock still has a place in today's scheme of things.

HOWARD JOHNSON

BILLY'S THE HERO!



Pic Ray Palmer

***BILLY SQUIER: 'Definitely not a* poseur' (But then again . . .Ed)**

GEORGIA SATELLITES
'Georgia Satellites'
(Elektra 9604 96-1)
KKKKK

THE GEORGIA SATELLITES are the essence of 'That Motion', the hipster style that has defined all great rock 'n' roll groups since the dawn of the *Jack Daniels* distillery. Last year they gave us the essential 'Keep The Faith' album, with its unassuming dedication to the pursuit of street corner wino rhythm justice and bounty hunting chords, and now, following a move to the mighty *Elektra* label, the foursome have conjured up a self-titled LP surely set to tear down the barricades.

The style of 'Keep The Faith' has remained practically unaltered – you still find country bluegrass roots fondling Berry rhythms, drawing succour from the Stones more bluesy-eyed squints, slaking thirst on Creedence Clearwater nectar, burrowing deep beneath the pugnacious pinewood of the Allmanns – yet what *has* happened is that the sound has broadened and hardened. Sure, the roar of the first album has been somewhat sacrificed in places thanks to a slightly smoother (and more expensive?) production from Jeff Glixman (also responsible for 'KTF'), but don't make the mistake of assuming this entails a loss of verve, swerve, excitement or intent. The Georgia Satellites still bounce on the *souls* of their steel-capped sneakers, rattling the trash cans well beyond the midnight hour. And the confidence quotient has increased vastly.

Song-wise, they've re-cut 'Keep Your Hands To Yourself' and 'Red Light' from their debut effort, adding in covers of Terry Anderson's 'Battleship Chains' and The Faces' 'Every Picture Tells A Story', plus new originals such as 'Railroad Steel', 'The Myth Of Love', 'Over and Over' and 'Nights Of Mystery'. Each and every number is a gem, flawed to perfection and rattling on the (12-) bars with all the inspiration of a band who just know they're going places (any places) with a backpack and a bottle.

Rock music still needs its hobos and road warriors, unafraid of the sunlight yet warmed by the duskiness of twilight. The Georgia Satellites are part of that heritage and this album is, consequently, a monument to their rapidly rising stature. MALCOLM DOME

NUCLEAR ASSAULT
'Game Over'
(Under One Flag FLAG 5)
KKK½

I THINK I like Nuclear Assault. Their music is a colourful, energetic clash of styles, a trainload of the criminally insane on a day-trip to Bognor colliding head-on with a runaway cement mixer. Or, to put it in more musical terms, S.O.D. (Stormtroopers Of Death) meeting Anthrax in a fight to the finish.

I don't think mainman/bassist Dan Lilker will be too overjoyed at that last bit, mind you. Seeing as how he's a former inmate of *both* institutions, I guess he'd rather pretend he's doing his own thing. At least I *think* he would.

Nuclear Assault have got a lot of admirable traits – and a few not so admirable ones too. Me? I like their sense of humour. Take 'Hang The Pope', for instance. *No-one* can sing 'Hang The Pope' *that* fast. I know, I've tried it. So have my friends. How does vocalist/guitarist John Connelly do it?

So much for the S.O.D. stuff. But there's some Anthrax too. 'Cold Steel' sounds as if it was booted out of 'Spreading The Disease' (the last 'Thrax album) and crawled onto 'Game Over' for want of anywhere warmer to hang out. Overdubs here is the name of the, uh, game as former TT Quick person Glenn Evans lays down about 15 drum tracks to out-do the Antmen's Charlie Benante for the 'Gung Ho' trophy.

'Brain Death', a forthcoming 12" single, is the blockbusting *piece-de-resistance*, standing sentinel at the butt end of the grooves. Wanna know something? Soon as I saw it was over seven minutes long I just *knew* it was gonna start with a nice fiddley acoustic bit. Surprise. It does. But when the track is stripped down to bare essentials and the guitars are allowed to stagger through the steam, Nuclear Assault sound like a real classy band. Too often, though, the Thrash passages are simply given a free reign, showing a lack of careful thought.

'After The Holocaust' is more along the right lines. The drum sound on this little gem is particularly immense and, sandwiched as it is between the 43 second blitz of 'Hang The Pope' and the 25 second pointless-but-fun 'Mr Softee Theme', it makes for a nice contrast, fooling the listener into believing it's more important than it actually is.

Hmmm . . . sounds a little critical so far. It's not meant to be, for Nuclear Assault have it in them to be a very good Thrash band. But why settle for second best? Marry the direction of 'After The Holocaust' with the intention behind 'Brain Death' and you've got an outfit with the ability to Thrash it out with the best of 'em yet still provide more thoughtful interludes, extending both the band's appeal and their options.

Oh yeah, I nearly forgot. Trade in your vocalist for a different model, huh Dan? PAUL MILLER

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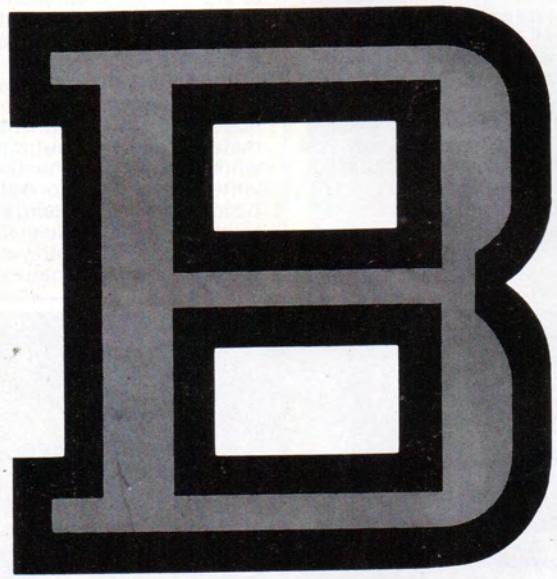
BAD COMPANY



FAME AND FORTUNE

NEW ALBUM
& CASSETTE

ATLANTIC

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FROM PAGE 18

MEGADETH
'Peace Sells . . . But Who's Buying?'
(Capitol EST 2022)
KKK

ALONGSIDE SLAYER, it's Megadeth who've been tipped as the next Thrash outfit to break out of The Underground and join the elite, rubbing shoulders with Metallica and Anthrax. They've already won the first battle in this particular war by hooking up with a major label, in this case *Capitol*, and it now remains to be seen if their music can attract the crossover punter.

Judging by the cover of 'Peace Sells . . .', Megadeth are attempting to put their image house in order; vocalist/guitarist Dave Mustaine looks quite the pretty boy, while fellow axepert Chris Poland has the kinda clean-cut image that is novel indeed in the Thrash world.

And musically? Those in the know will be aware of Mustaine's one-time association with Metallica, so it'll come as no surprise that Megadeth's Metal lies firmly in that sphere – taut guitars that grind and fire like there's no tomorrow, completely wicked time changes designed to catch your ears out at every twist and turn and a tortured, tormented vocal delivery.

Yet maybe this is Megadeth's main stumbling block in their bid for major status. I have to say that their music is always lagging a touch behind the mighty Metallica; their tunes aren't quite as memorable and Mustaine's strangled vocals come home a poor second after James Hetfield's. To be quite frank, young Dave really detracts from the strength of the songs. 'Devil's Island' and 'Peace Sells. . .' itself are corking thrashers but the vocals are just too downright barmy to enhance the music.

And if, as Megadeth profess, they are seriously making tracks away from the negative area of Thrash, then why persist with typical hack 'n' slash, devil-worshipping lyrical rubbish? Who really wants to read lines like: '*One more bloody massacre, the murder's complete/I seek to dismember, a sadist fiend*'?

Megadeth still have some way to go before they're *real* contenders, but the potential is there – lurking in the undergrowth!

HOWARD JOHNSON

CJSS
'Praise The Loud'
(Black Dragon 16 import)
KKKK

ARGUMENTS MAY rage on about which of this New Wave Of Guitar Heroes is the most proficient, but there can be little doubt about the most *prolific*; 'Praise The Loud' is David T. Chastain's *third* album release this year, succeeding the CJSS debut LP, 'World Gone Mad', and Chastain's second solo album, 'Ruler Of The Wasteland'.

However, although getting on for 30 original songs committed to vinyl within eight or nine months sounds impressive, isn't there just a chance that the man might be spreading himself a little thin? Considering the quad-K quality of the June-released Chastain album (see review issue 127), David T. would have to reappear with all guns blazing simply to disprove this theory. And what's more, the rest of CJSS (that's singer Russell Jinkens, bassist Mike Skimmerhorn and drummer Les Sharp) would have to turn in a pretty powerful performance to justify the mainman's decision of keeping this band his main priority

He *does* and they *do*. Simply 'Praise The Loud' reaffirms Chastain's reputation as one of the most accomplished and exciting 'new' guitarists on the Metal scene, and supports his faith in CJSS as his regular band. From the off, he's in at the deep end, asserting his authority with thick, clubbing riffs and shrill, cascading solos, snatching each track by the scruff of the neck and force-feeding it energy with surge-after-surge of electrifying wire-work. And behind him JSS battle for similar recognition; Jinkens proves he has a stronger voice than Leather (female vocalist on the Chastain albums), Sharp is reliably rumbustuous throughout and Skimmerhorn more than justifies being used for both projects.

But while CJSS outranks Chastain personnel-wise, honours are decidedly even material-wise – not surprising when you consider that David T. writes all the music for both bands. As with Chastain, this is refined, unashamedly guitar-dominated Metal: wild yet precise, violent yet mature and ever so slightly Dio-esque. In any case, it's very, very good and certainly worthy of your attention.

'Citizen Of Hell' is a particular favourite – a doomy plodder neatly sown together by a number of interesting passages, and a welcome breather after the opening onslaught of 'Out Of Control', 'Land Of The Free', 'Don't Play With Fire' and 'Praise The Loud' – while 'The Bargain', which closes the album, is another oustanding effort, sweeping cleverly and dramatically through changes in pace and mood yet remaining delightfully unpredictable.

'Danger' once again shows Chastain's imaginative songwriting style, and in fact only 'Metal Forever' falls noticeably below standard. The naff title kinda gives the game away.

For the most part, however, C-J-S-S are C-LA-S-S, and never more so than when Chastain is off on his frantic fretboard frolics. Perhaps the best illustration of his ability comes during 'Thunder And Lightning' – a turbulent, tropical storm-like instrumental that finds him going berserk, letting his imagination (not to mention fingers) run riot.

While Metal has guitarists of this calibre, we should indeed 'Praise The Loud'.

MARK PUTTERFORD

JOHN PARR
'Running The Endless Mile'
(London LONLP 23)
KKKKK

JOHN PARR burst onto the scene last year like a delightful aneurism, fresh blood flowing into old wounds. In America he

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hit the charts with the strongly slinky 'Naughty Naughty', paving the way for 'St. Elmo's Fire' and the Number One success 'Two Hearts (American Anthem)'. Moreover, John became so popular that he even began marketing his own line in clothing! In Britain, 'St. Elmo's Fire' positioned him nicely and the recent Meat Loaf collaboration *via* 'Rock & Roll Mercenaries' has compounded his reputation as a man with the Midas blueprint.

What first attracted me to John's music was the combination of memorably pert 'n' poppy songs allied to fiercely rock 'n' roll arrangements. The man soon established himself, in my leaflet, as a *bona fide* talent. Thus, I eagerly anticipated the arrival of 'Running The Endless Mile'. And in every fashion Parr has delivered a masterpiece.

The Parr style is unmistakable as soon as 'Two Hearts (American Athem)' (the theme song for a major Yank movie) brandishes its tremulous pulse rate, John's guitar flashing a gusty momentum across the plaintively disco rhythmic chant of drums and bass. You can tell immediately why it was so popular in the US. 'Don't Worry 'Bout Me' and 'King Of Lies' continue to fold down the beat in similar vein, both dealing lyrically with the emotive bruising of loves lost and gained.

'Running The Endless Mile' itself slows the pace right down to a smooch and this one does take rather a lot of listening to before it grows into an absolute monster of integrated humane circuitry, the softly winnowing keyboards of Richard Cottle cooing gently as Parr's despairing vocals chase the fading twilight shadows thrown out by Martin Dobson's quashing saxophone. *Side One* ends with a re-run of 'Don't Leave Your Mark On Me', co-written by Parr and Julia Downes for Meat Loaf (check out the 'Bad Attitude' LP), subsequently recorded on Parr's debut album and now re-done with an extra texture of layered momentum turning what's always been a superbly haunting song into a decadent bohemian romp – *sensational!*

But worthy though the first side may be, it merely sets the scene for the quite amazing run-through of classics on *Side Two*. 'Scratch' veritably leaps out, with the disco pulse and harsh rockin' guitars blending into a joyous electric *cantata* that I'd suggest is Parr's finest offering thus far. And the uptempo browse of 'Do It Again' and 'Blame It On The Radio' give vent to a torrent of unquenchable hooklines before 'The Story Still Remains The Same' (heavily electronic) changes the pacing without altering the distilled content of intensity. And 'Steal You Away (Flight Of The Spruce Goose)' – yet another movie theme song – ends it all with a shoulder-brush of partisan activity and copious, rousing tunefulness.

John Parr has now established a style of presentation that is hallmarked across each and every one of his songs. With 'Running The Endless Mile', he's shown that the fine cloak of development fits roundly on his torso. This is a mature album that retains the youthful passion of his previous LP yet has added in the breadth of experience, studio technique and confidence. A special record indeed.

MALCOLM DOME

JOHN FOGERTY
'Eye Of The Zombie'
(Warner Brothers 925 449-1)
KK½

THERE'S DEFINITELY no mistaking the voice. Creedence Clearwater classics like 'Proud Mary' and 'Bad Moon Rising' brought it to everyone's attention at the end of the Sixties and it's remained easily recognisable ever since.

His last album, 1985's highly successful 'Centerfield', confirmed that whatever it was that Creedence had in their time and Fogerty individually *still* has, remains very popular after all these years. What 'it' is that Fogerty has – from the evidence on this album – boils down to decent enough gutsy vocals, a limited ability as a guitarist and a similarly limited songwriting style, though consistent in that the songs are mostly mid-tempo affairs anchored by strong, 'get down an' groove' bass lines, but usually with little else to single them out.

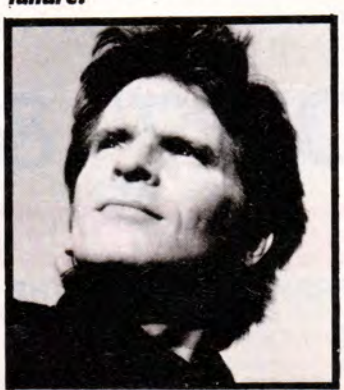
However, for all their limitations, the best of the songs still manage to work. And it's probably the sheer simplicity of a number like 'Change In The Weather', with its single-note throbbing bass line and a couple of very rudimentary guitar solos, which is the root of its appeal. Together with the equally 'unsophisticated' title track and the r'n'b chug-a-lug of 'Headlines', these are examples of what Fogerty does best and does well.

But when he branches out the results are disappointing to say the least. 'Knocking On Your Door' comes across as a limp attempt to deliver a soul number in the Sixties *Stax* vein (Sam & Dave, Eddie Floyd *etc*); 'gettin' down and gettin' funky' with 'Wasn't That A Woman' and, more so, 'Soda Pop' are the two most notable failures to get to grips with the essential elements of the style; while 'Sail Away' tries to be two or three things at the same time – one of them being a Paul Simon-style song – and ends up being none of them.

You can't blame someone for attempting to provide variety, but if that's what Fogerty wanted to do he should have enlisted the services of other songwriters rather than going it alone and ending up with a number of tracks which are little more than brave attempts.

PAUL HENDERSON

JOHN FOGERTY: A brave failure?



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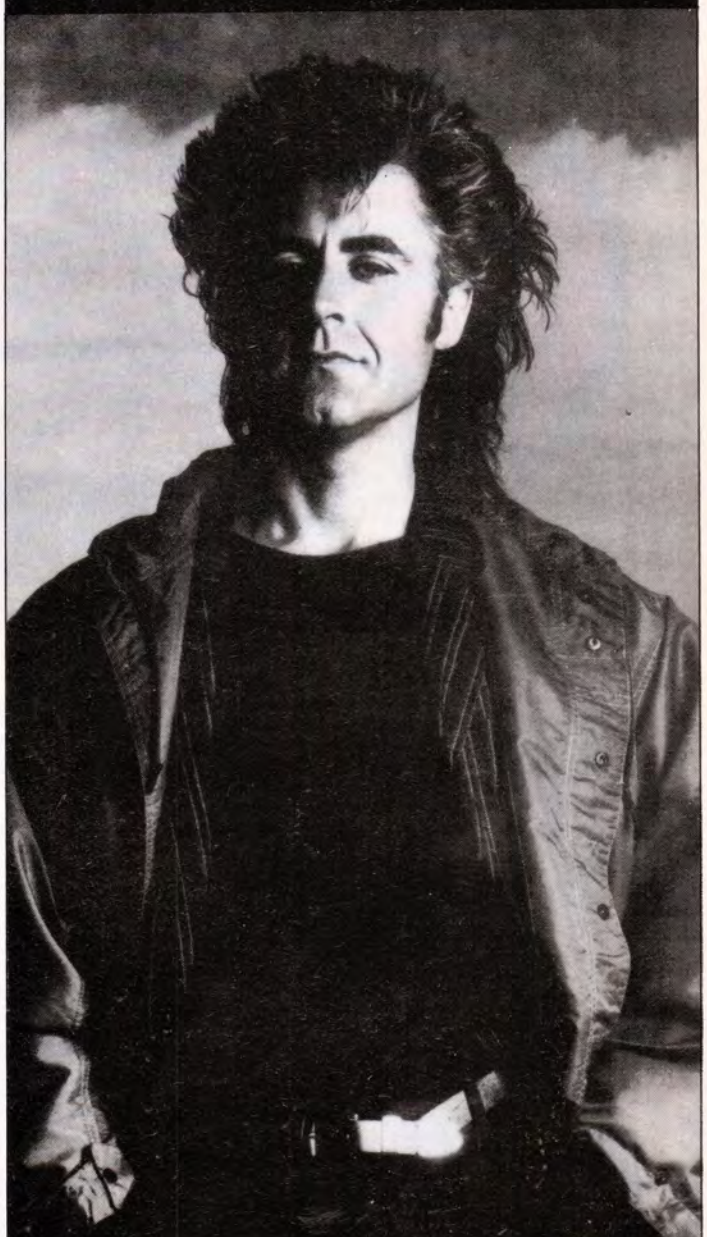
JOHN · PARR



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EMI

FROM PAGE 21

POSSESSED
'Beyond The Gates'
(Under One Flag 3)
KKK

THE CURRENT darlings of the Thrash Underground have returned and it's instantly obvious that little has changed in the Possessed camp. Just as 'Seven Churches' was a flawed debut album, so 'Beyond The Gates' is its flawed successor.

However, the band *do* manage to castrate at birth the popular misconception that Thrash outfits are real gumbos when it comes to musicianship. In fact, 'Beyond . . .' boasts some of the most punchy, fluid and, above all, interesting guitar work it's been my pleasure to encounter in quite some time.

No, where Possessed fall down is in their apparent lack of musical diversity and Jeff Becerra's very one-dimensional voice. Growling anti-vocals that carry no melody are fine in their proper place (say, on a Bathory album), but spread over both sides (as they are here) they soon become tiresome. Becerra should take note of Onslaught's Sy Keeler, a man who can growl 'n' grimace with the best of 'em then send his voice soaring skywards in a single beat; essential flexibility for any Thrash outfit hoping to escape the suffocating (albeit well-meaning) clutches of The Underground.

The same rigidity holds true for much of the songwriting. Whilst a bad song doesn't get so much as a finger-hold on these grooves, a sizeable chunk of the material on display has been gleaned from the Slayer cookbook. The title cut, in particular, has been hard-boiled and left to simmer for three minutes in truest 'Show No Mercy' tradition.

In fact, the only slow passage on the album is the minute or so that comprises 'Heretic (Intro)' which, as it's written by producer Carl Canedy, suggests that should Possessed wanna spread their wings a little further in the future, they may well run into one or two difficulties.

Still, 'BTG' remains a sound, safe Thrash album that'll disappoint none of the band's already sizeable following and should accelerate their reputation into the bargain.

PAUL MILLER

ONE STEP BEYOND...

POSSESSED: Taking recipes from the Slayer cookbook

RIC OCASEK
'This Side Of Paradise'
(Geffen 924 098-1)
KKK

I KNOW it's rather stating the obvious, but if you like The Cars you'll probably go for this album as well. Ocasek is, after all, the band's mainman (I particularly avoided the term '*driving* force'), writing most (all?) of their material and having the face and voice most often associated with The Cars. (Although bassist Ben Orr may now challenge him having been the vocalist on the worldwide mega-hit 'Drive'.)

'This Side Of Paradise' has a fair proportion of pop pap – like 'True To You', which features three other Cars members, and the soppy 'Emotion In Motion'. It also features a few 'name' musicians, including Tears For Fears' Roland Orzobal and Peter Gabriel bassist Tony Levin, whose contributions mostly pass unnoticed except for a clutch of difficult-to-ignore guitar parts from swashbuckling Idol associate Steve Stevens. He springs into action (as well as to Ocasek's rescue) with sufficient energy and urgency to lift 'Keep On Laughin'' and 'Hello Darkness' out of the impending gloom, and brings the album's one *really* hot property, 'Coming For You', up to the point of combustion.

Without Stevens the whole thing would be a pleasant enough Sunday afternoon drive. When he *does* appear, the country road changes briefly into a stretch of motorway.

PAUL HENDERSON

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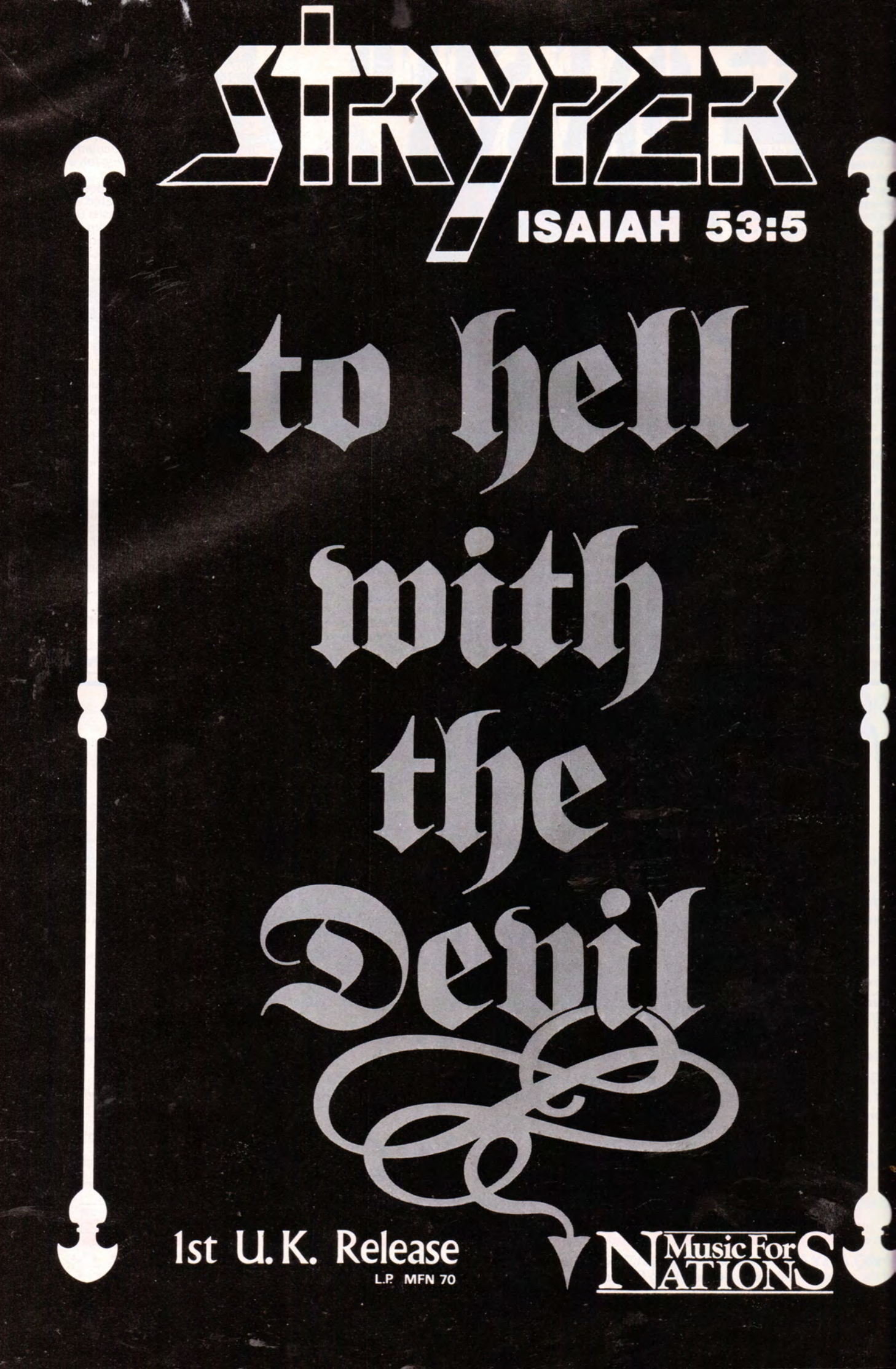
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Music For NATIONS

FROM PAGE 23

VOODOO CHILD
'Acid Tales And Mermaids'
(Aftermath AFT2)
K

DANTE SUGGESTED I review this record in three words – *Hendrix is dead* – but I thought I'd be a touch more sensitive and explanatory than that.

I thought I'd attempt a meticulous analytical study of 'ATAM', probing deep beneath the vinyl to discover the album's relevance in today's society and its possible effect on the progression of the rock music *genre* as a whole. I thought I'd then turn the 'spotlight of scrutiny' on the band itself, delve into the depths of its personnel and examine the emotional and psychological rationality behind this threesome's fanatical intention of visually and musically ripping off the Jimi Hendrix Experience; and especially that of black singer/guitarist Rickey Powell, an uncanny Hendrix imitator. I thought I'd pose crucial questions like: why are this lot stuck in a tedious time-warp? How on earth did they get a record deal? Why am I reviewing this? And so on. But ultimately I thought . . . oh sod it!

Hendrix is dead.

MARK PUTTERFORD

EUROPE
'The Final Countdown'
(Epic EPC 2608)
KK½

'THE FINAL COUNTDOWN' is the third album from Sweden's finest (or maybe that should read 'biggest'!), Europe, and their first to receive any kind of worldwide attention. The band have been signed to Journey's *Nightmare* management company which should stand them in good stead Stateside, but I have to admit that I don't hear much to get excited about here.

Whereas the first two albums had more than a few hefty moments in amongst the pretty tunes, 'TFC' is virtually blandola all the way; pleasant, far too pleasant and boasting the most nauseating keyboard sound on a title track of all time. 'Parp parp' to you too, mates!

It's not that Europe are bad, just bland and boring. Standard Joey Tempest vocals, standard titles such as 'Heart Of Stone' and standard review I'm afraid. All it deserves.

HOWARD JOHNSON

BRIAN SPENCE
'Brothers'
(Polydor POLD 5195)
KK¾

WHO IS Brian Spence? Is he Bryan Adams? Is he Rick Springfield? Nope, although judging by his debut album he obviously *thinks* he could be, strumming his way harmlessly through a field of flimsy fodder like 'Wondering How To Cry' and 'I Will Call You Family' (naff titles or what?), trying to convince himself of the fact.

The trouble is, Brian Spence isn't a patch on either of the aforementioned AORsters. His voice isn't as strong or as striking, his material is nowhere near as infectious or memorable and he just doesn't have that special something to provide a spark of excitement and make you want to give the album more time to work on you. As it is – like 'Doom' commented while the thing spun peacefully away in the office – you tend to forget it's playing after a while; certain songs (like opener 'Hear It From The Heart', for example) grab your attention with the first few bars, then let it slip casually away. Where's the passion and the raunch of Adams? Or the melody and emotion of Springfield? It's not on 'Brothers', that's for sure!

Despite the clean production and the general kompetence of Spence's performance (incidentally, he handles all guitars, bass and keyboards as well as vocals) *and* that of his backing musicians, everything comes across as tame, insipid and very ordinary. Ten minutes after playing the album you find it real hard to remember any of the songs.

MARK PUTTERFORD

METAL CHURCH
'The Dark'
(Elektra 60493-1 import)
KKKK

OK, HANDS up if you know the answer to this one: name a single Metal act who didn't wimp out when picked up by a major label? Hmm . . . no takers?

Well, now you can add the name of Metal Church to the list of bands who equate big bucks with mild guitars, 'Mutt' Lange-style drums and conservative use of the gas pedal. But then did anyone *really* expect otherwise? Facing facts, whatever vinyl Metal Church chose to put out as their second LP was always gonna play second fiddle to their monstrously brilliant debut. Just how *do* you follow up such a flawless work as 'Metal Church'? Easy. You *don't*.

Simply, you sign to a major – *Elektra* in this case – and compromise your sound to the extent where mass commercial acceptability (*aka* Big Bucks) is almost as certain as the trouncing of the Iron Tyrantess at the next general election.

But once you've come to terms with the fact that 'The Dark' was never gonna be as solidly hefty as its predecessor, you start to appreciate it as an impressive album in its own right. For a start, those drums push the thing along like an artery on overdrive, and even the cynical mixing down of Kurdt Vanderhoof and Craig Wells' dual guitar work – MC's strongest point – is not as detrimental as one would think, as it's in the songwriting stakes that this Seattle quintet really shine. 'Watch The Children Pray', for example, reveals a totally new side to the band, building from a quite exquisite ballad to a heavy Sabbath-type riff for the chorus, whilst vocalist David Wayne turns in his most melodic performance to date. Beautiful.

Elsewhere, 'Method To Your Madness' opts for an almost Def Leppard-esque galloping style, though Church fans of yore are not totally forgotton; opener, 'Ton Of Bricks', for instance, is traditional MC fare, while 'Over My Dead Body' is so good it could almost have been lifted from the first Grave Digger album. Ditto 'Line Of Death', a rip-snorting fire-breather, and the closing thrash of 'Western Alliance'.

Metal Church obviously have their money heads screwed on tightly – or perhaps the record company are wielding the screwdriver – as 'The Dark' is exactly the kind of album greedily consumed by the Metal market at large: a delicate balance of semi-Speed and lightweight material. Go get 'em, boyz!

PAUL MILLER

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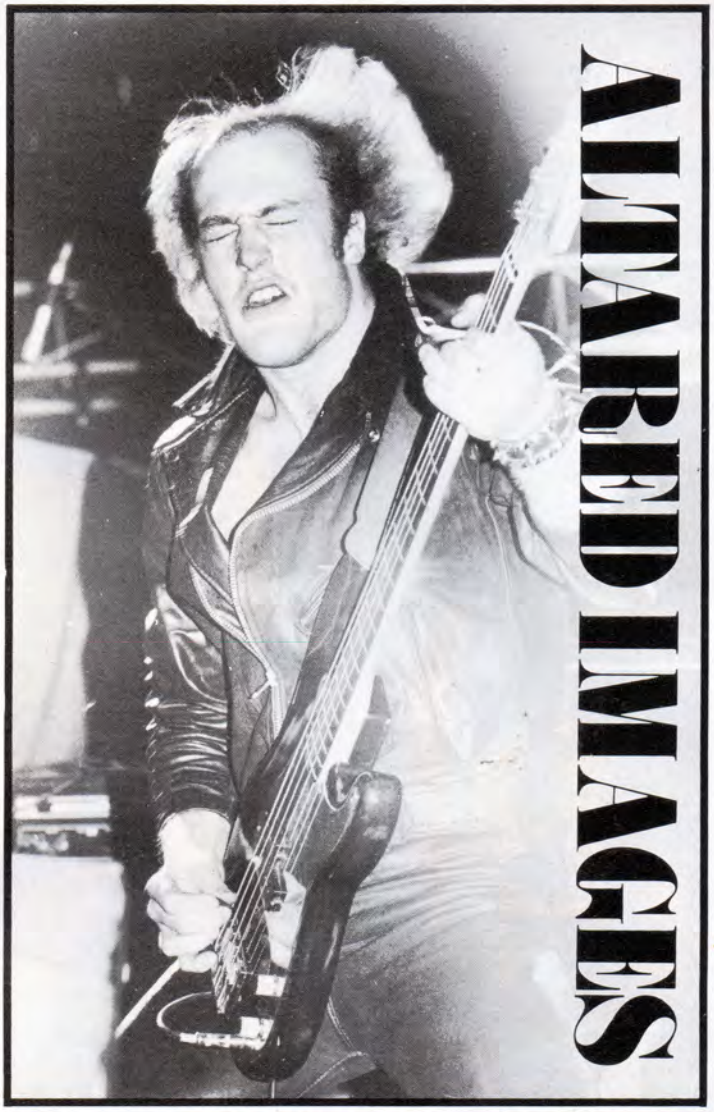

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MFN 67

FROM PAGE 25

TOTO
'Fahrenheit'
(CBS 57091)
KKKK½

'FAHRENHEIT', THANK heavens, is a solid, professional-sounding album, and if you've been waiting for it as keenly as I have the anticipation is definitely rewarded; fresh, alert, groovy and considerably consise, Toto obviously mean to court some serious chart action!

The band are slick purveyors of quality rock who have tackled the difficult experience of prolonged studio work with a determination to succeed against a hostile opinion that would clearly like, amongst other things, to flush them down the toilet. And now, with new vocalist Joseph Williams at the helm they've successfully plugged a dangerous gap that might have silenced them for good.

'Fahrenheit' (produced by the group themselves) is lavishly embossed, with enough frills an' thrills to delight those already familiar with this direction and reach out to a wider audience at whom tracks like 'Don't Stop Me Now' (featuring jazz man Miles Davis) and 'Lea' (a moody ballad) are no doubt aimed. No corners have been cut, all the tracks are pristine and perfect and the result is succulent enough not to let interest wander for a split second. Gloriously multi-layered, harmony-encrusted voices, different keyboard and fretboard-burning guitar sounds rise and fall to fit the mood and the melody.

Where this version of Toto excel is in the vocal dept. Williams has a clean, continuously exciting voice that conjures up no immediate comparisons, the perfect springboard for the swoony emotion of love songs like 'Can't Stand It Any Longer' and 'Without Your Love', which boasts a Steve Lukather guitar solo quite simply in a class of its own.

And speaking of uptempo guitar work, you'll tune into plenty on tracks like 'Till The End' and 'We Can Make It Tonight'; both ring out with power and exuberence, Lukather's nifty ability to be unobtrusive and unpretentious working a treat.

So there it is. A thoroughly enjoyable album for almost any occasion, and, it's pretty damn gratifying to think that after nearly a decade of making high-tech rock of one sort or another this lot are still very much alive and heading straight for the top.

DEREK OLIVER

RIO
'Sex Crimes'
(Music For Nations MFN 65)
KKK

FIRST THINGS FIRST. This record has the most utterly pathetic sleeve you could possibly come up with for a title such as 'Sex Crimes': a (fairly) naked woman with airbrushed wings holding a hangman's noose. What point are they trying to make? Sexual symbolism? Bleugh! And what's more, why the hell am I even bothering to comment on such crude garbage?!

So, assessed on sleeve value alone, this record scores a Zero-K rating, and to be boldly honest the actual music isn't that much better. With 'Borderland', their debut LP, the Rio nucleus of Jon Neil and Steve Rodford actually went some way to achieving a fairly listenable, some would say *remarkably* listenable, slice of mid-Atlantic mayhem. On the left side there was a fairly pompous attempt at conjuring up those high-heeled harmonies and American hooklines, whilst on the right side we received smacking guitar chords and the rawest rhythm rucking bar AC/DC at their power hungry best. It was good, finely tuned stuff, ringing with a sense of emergency and efficient accessibility.

'Sex Crimes' (oh, how I hate to write that!) is a follow-up record that sounds fine at first, wilts a little with the next couple of spins and finally collapses beneath its own inadequacies third time around. Tired and cantankerous, the melodies here are mostly secondhand leftovers from old and forgotten AOR albums from the likes of Tycoon, Spys and Morningstar. Jon Neil has a good but not great voice and uses it to maximum effect . . . but even this isn't enough to salvage the mess of melody from the subliminal and mucho annoying simplistic rhythm work (courtesy I should think of a fully tanked-up, programmable drum machine).

Here we have ten tunes, only four of which could sweep Rio into the American Top 20: namely, 'Danger Zone' (like a Metal Hall & Oates), 'Dirty Movies' (boasting a riff uncommonly similar to Rainbow's 'All Night Long'), 'Pay For Love' (a toon Def Leppard might have written if they could be bothered!) and the current single 'Atlantic Radio' (a mega hookline brightened by dainty harmonies). The rest is frankly not worth a mention and worsened ever so by that bloody two-bit drum machine!

Despite my criticisms, I believe that Rio may still have something to offer, but if they leave it much longer I'm certain there won't be anybody around to cotton on.

DEREK OLIVER

LIZZY BORDEN
'Menace To Society'
(Roadrunner 9664)
KKKK

'MENACE TO SOCIETY' is this Kalifornian kwintet's fourth release in just two years, following hot on the (spiked) heels of their 'Murderess Metal Roadshow' opus. On the strength of this latest offering it would appear that the Lizzy Borden image and overall concept is developing into someting quite spectacular. True, the Kiss influence still looms large; one look at the inner sleeve artwork will convince you of that, but there's been a definite move away from the 'Iron Maiden copy band' stance. Guitarists Gene Allen and Alex Nelson prove themselves one of the tightest teams of the moment, indulging in some glorious bouts of twin-lead sparring with an almost telepathic sense of timing.

Opening cut 'Generation Aliens' bears this out in style, but stick that needle down *anywhere* within these grooves and you won't be more than a few seconds away from another blistering solo. Full marks to producer Jim Faraci who has done a fine job harnessing the full-bodied thwack of the Borden axe.

With titles like 'Bloody Mary', 'Ultra Violence' and 'Love Kills', it's obvious that the emphasis is still heavily on blood, guts 'n' gore, although this time the subject matter is handled with a heightened sense of subtlety – more 'Psycho' than 'Friday The 13th'.

Masters of mood and atmosphere, the Lizzys have succeeded in conjuring up some genuinely chilling moments on 'Menace To Society'. Quake to the sound of 'Love Kills' with its deliciously sinister guitar work; hide behind the nearest armchair as a 'Destroyer'-style news broadcast heralds the beginning of 'Terror On The Town' with its vicious riff hacking 'n' slashing its way around a rabble-rousing chorus. Mighty blood-curdling stuff, to be sure.

I do have one small axe to grind (groan), however. Lizzy's tortured-death-scream vocals get a little tiresome towards the end of the record, but that's a minor quibble. This is one piece of vinyl that goes straight for the jugular and draws blood *every* time. I can't wait to see them live!

MAURA SUTTON

LIZZY BORDEN: The kutting krew. . .

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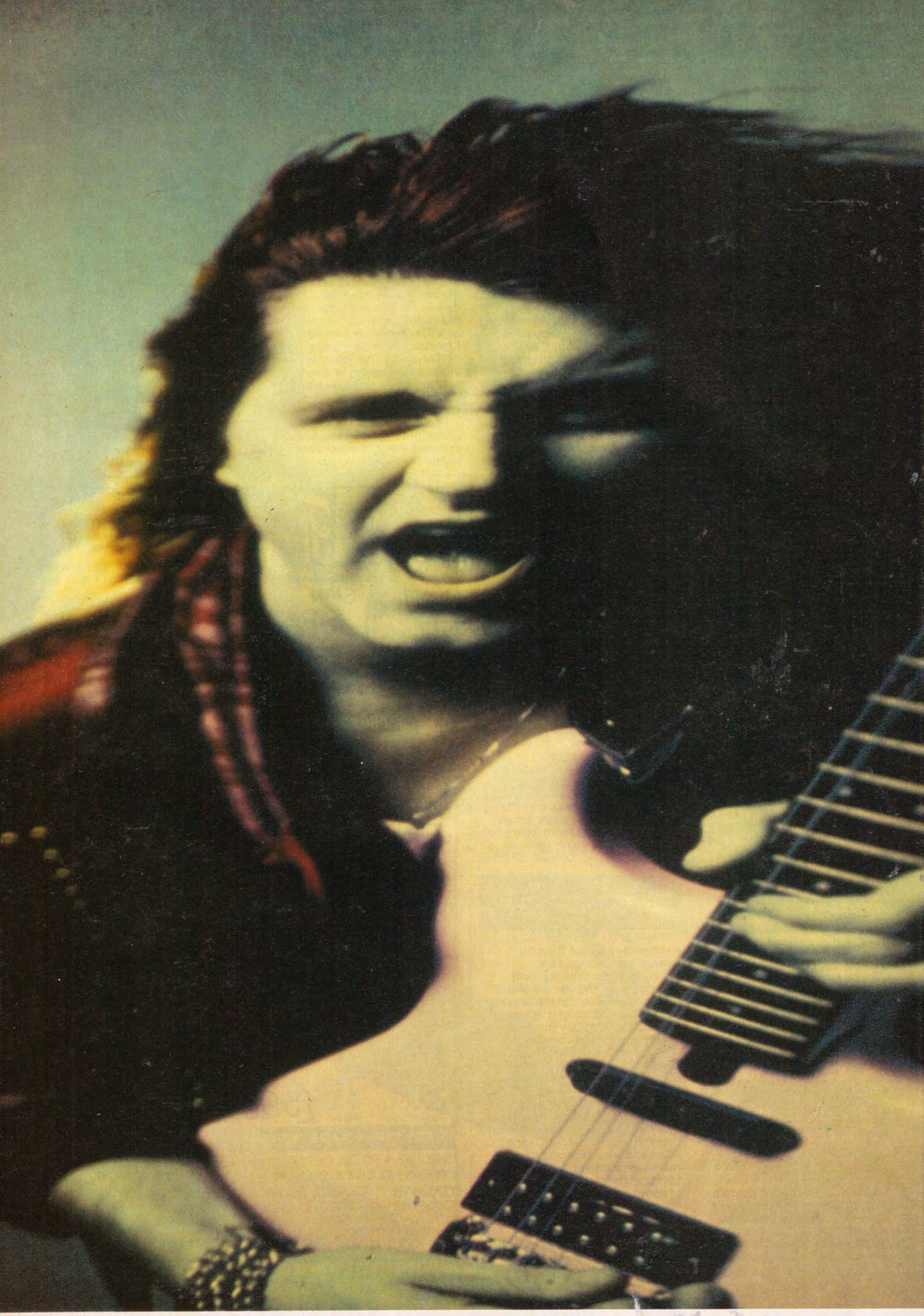

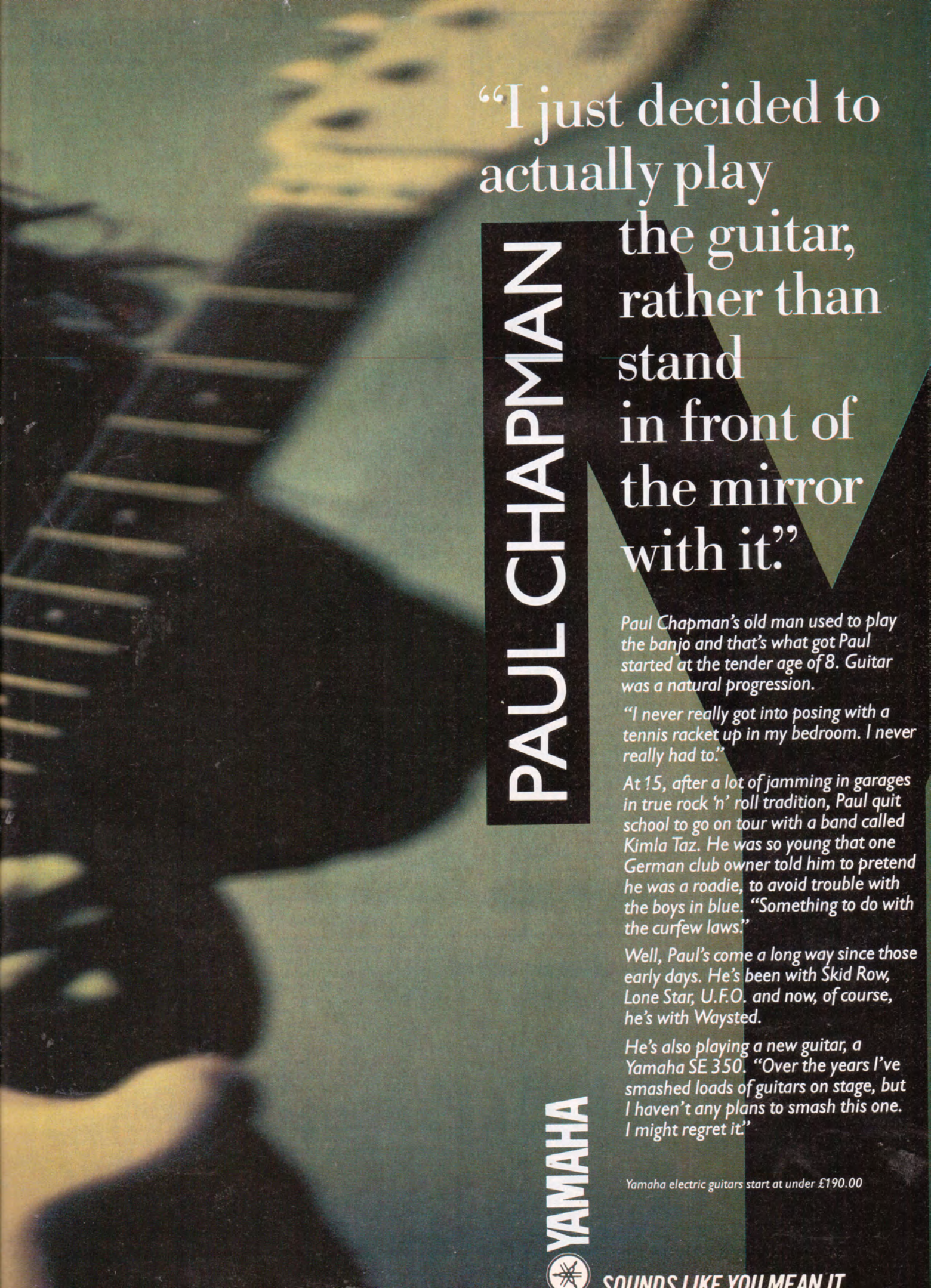

"I just decided to actually play the guitar, rather than stand in front of the mirror with it."

PAUL CHAPMAN

Paul Chapman's old man used to play the banjo and that's what got Paul started at the tender age of 8. Guitar was a natural progression.

"I never really got into posing with a tennis racket up in my bedroom. I never really had to."

At 15, after a lot of jamming in garages in true rock 'n' roll tradition, Paul quit school to go on tour with a band called Kimla Taz. He was so young that one German club owner told him to pretend he was a roadie, to avoid trouble with the boys in blue. "Something to do with the curfew laws."

Well, Paul's come a long way since those early days. He's been with Skid Row, Lone Star, U.F.O. and now, of course, he's with Waysted.

He's also playing a new guitar, a Yamaha SE 350. "Over the years I've smashed loads of guitars on stage, but I haven't any plans to smash this one. I might regret it."

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YAMAHA

SOUNDS LIKE YOU MEAN IT

KULTURE!

EDITED BY MALCOLM DOME

FILMZ

'POLTERGEIST II – THE OTHER SIDE' (15)

YOU DON'T need to have seen the original Spielberg/Hooper 'Poltergeist' to follow 'Poltergeist II'. Indeed, it's probably better if you haven't!

Some people do insist that all sequels are merely an attempt to repeat a previous success but I've always felt that this isn't necessarily the case (witness the superb 'Aliens'); 'Poltergeist II' seems to fit nicely into this theory.

The recently terrorised Freeling family move from their ex-home (now hole in the ground) to stay with Grandma. In general, the family seem to have come to terms remarkably well with the somewhat unusual events which resulted in the disappearance of their house!

Needless to say, the malevolent spirits haven't finished yet, not by a long chalk! Nasty things soon start happening again!

The main problem with the film is that it isn't very frightening. Most of the set-pieces don't quite come off, probably due to the rather odd pacing which fails to build up much tension. As for the film's climax, well the less said the better!

However, the cast generally perform well and there is also a lot of humour running throughout, both intentional and otherwise! It's certainly *never* boring.

ALAN EWERS

'A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART II – FREDDY'S REVENGE' (18)

HE'S BACK! Freddy Krueger (Robert Englund), arguably the most 'popular' homicidal maniac since 'Friday The 13th's Jason Voorhees. This is the sequel to the excellent 'A Nightmare On Elm Street', but '. . . Freddy's Revenge' is a real disappointment.

All the sweltering electricity and haunting atmospherics of Wes Craven's truly memorable original have been dissipated by a plot and direction (from Jack Sholder) that is slick yet lacking in the menace of yore.

Jesse (Mark Patton), a down-home, all-American high-school kid, is the victim of Freddy's intentions this time around, as he attempts to possess the body, soul and mind of the youngster. But something is missing and you end up having little interest in how it all resolves itself in a welter of sentimentality, proclaiming the power of love . . . yuegh!

Sure, there are some fine moments (the surrealistic opening sequences, for instance), but in the main this is average fodder. However, the *good* news is that 'Part III' is already being planned and Wes Craven will return to the helm, giving hope that next time around we'll get another sensational buzz.

MALCOLM DOME

'TRICK OR TREAT'

SOON TO be unleashed is the much-heralded flick in which Ozzy Osbourne plays a rock-hating hellfire preacher, titled 'Trick Or Treat'.

So, in time for Hallowe'en, your mega-monstrous *Kerrang!* has unearthed the following exclusive details of the movie to whet your blood-flecked appetites.

Directed by 'American Graffiti' star Charles Martin Smith, 'Trick Or Treat' stars Tony Fields as HM hero Sammi Curr who returns 'from beyond' after getting frazzled in a fire. Like a moral-majority mom's wet dream of a rock star, Sammi is described by Fields as "This psychotic . . . who lives in the music airwaves and can come out through the speakers by the incantation of backmasking."

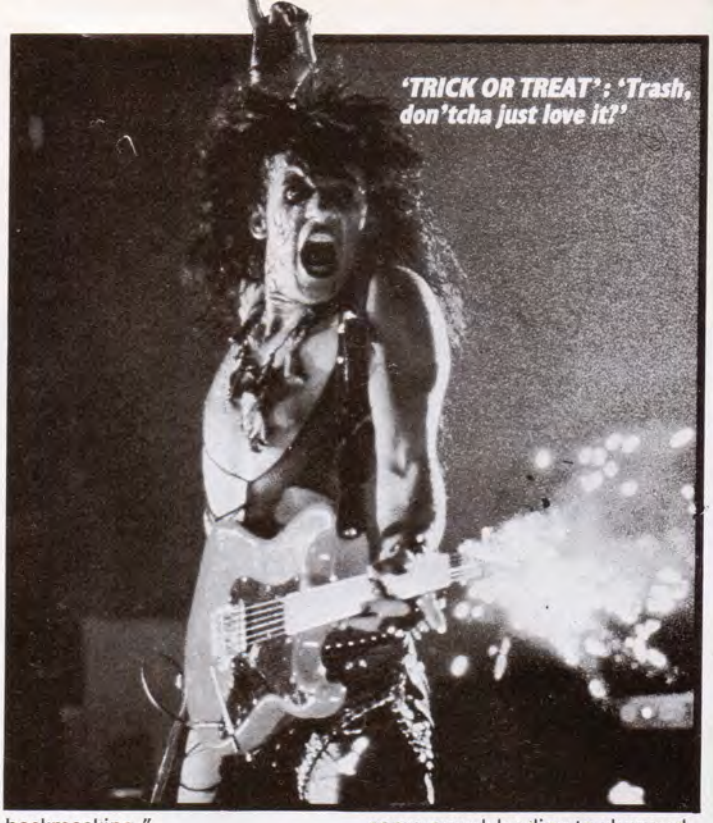
Enemy of this Ozzy-like fellow, who bites off snake heads and puts secret satanic messages on LPs, is the Rev. Gillstrom, oddly portrayed by Ozzy himself in a piece of reverse casting.

The tale concerns a fan who, upset by Curr's death, is given a tape of his last unreleased HM album by DJ Norm 'Nuke' Taurog (none other than Kiss-er Gene Simmons!) only to find it has an evil message – for him alone! Trying to escape, the fan drops HM and tries MOR but soon decides that "Even *death* is preferable to this s**t!"

The *real* star of 'TOT' seems to be Skeezix, a demon etched on Curr's chest who comes to life to sort out his fan's high school enemies – thugs, teachers, *etc.* Ah, trash, don'tcha just love it?

Hopefully, 'Trick Or Treat' will get a UK release in the near future.

SANDY ROBERTSON



'TRICK OR TREAT'; 'Trash, don'tcha just love it?'

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VIDEOZ

'TORMÉ – TATTOOED LOVE BOYS' (12 Bar Video)

TORMÉ ARE arguably one of the *better* British bands doing the rounds at the moment. 'Tattooed Love Boys' is a brave attempt to capture the hot 'n' sticky excitement that makes their show such a unique event. Filmed at the cavernous *Hammersmith Clarendon Ballroom* in the Spring of this year, it shows the band at their rip-snortin' best (see review in *Kerrang!* 119 for the full gig story).

Whilst more financially well-endowed groups usually have a camera with them onstage, on this occasion the cameramen were situated on precarious perches among the audience, giving the finished product a heightened sense of atmosphere all too often missing from live videos.

Unfortunately, it also results in some decidedly dodgy camerawork leading to chopped-off heads, diagonal bassists and erratic panning. The same goes for the lighting, which gets full marks for realism but zero for clarity. That said, though, the music and the performances are faultless.

Most of the set is faithfully represented here, right down to the frenetic 'New Orleans' cover, which closes the whole proceedings in grand style. But I've one *major* complaint, or rather question. Why does 'Tattooed Love Boys' cost as much as a regular 90-minute video when it's a mere *45 minutes* in length?

MAURA SUTTON

'CREAM: FAREWELL APPEARANCE' (PolyGram Videos)

IT WAS the night of November 26, 1968. Cream, one of the greatest rock bands of all time,were making their last appearance at the *Royal Albert Hall*. It was the end of an era. The men o'Cream, Eric Clapton (guitar), Jack Bruce (bass/vocals) and Ginger Baker (drums), rose to an historic occasion by giving one of the best, and certainly happiest, performaces of their brief career.

As I went to the concert, I was more than anxious to see this video, originally made by director Tony Palmer for *BBC TV*.

What I got was a series of shocks: the raw raucous power of the band, the naked simplicity of the presentation, the supreme 'togetherness' of Mr. Clapton during his interview segment, and Jack Bruce's peculiar feathered hat. The video is vastly entertaining, and an authentic glimpse into the state of rock art in 1968. As Baker, Bruce and Clapton blast into 'Sunshine Of Your Love', 'Politician', 'White Room', 'Spoonful', 'Toad' and 'I'm So Glad' you see and hear the complete opposite of today's tightly disciplined perfection.

The interviews are as entertaining as the songs, with

Eric proudly showing off the intricacies of his guitar – four knobs and a wah-wah pedal – and Ginger is in his element demonstrating 'flam triplets'. The over-dubbed questions from the interviewer creates a surreal air, but Ginger's subsequent solo on the legendary 'Toad' is a Wagnerian storm of humanity fighting the elements.

It's strange to note how the band changes its appearance from interview sequences to the concert footage. Ginger seems much younger in a leather jacket and flowing red hair while demonstrating his drumming techniques, and looks lined and haggard during the concert. Eric appears with massive flowing hair and drooping moustache, then shorn and clean shaven later – a nightmare for continuity.

One other shock remained as I viewed this farewell to Cream for the first time in yonks. As the camera panned around the audience in the closing shots, I saw myself sitting up in the stalls animatedly discussing the concert with a friend, and for a few seconds staring right into the camera. A weird time machine effect that would have delighted H G Wells!

CHRIS WELCH

***'MOTÖRHEAD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY'* (*Virgin Videos*)**

'MOTÖRHEAD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY' suffers from a definite lack of atmosphere. It was a hellish couple of nights at the *Hammersmith Odeon* last year, but as the video winds on it becomes evident that the majority of the onstage action is easily demonstrated within the first two numbers. By the time you've reached the encore of 'Motörhead' things are decidedly 'iffy', the damn show having outstayed its welcome by a dozen songs or more. Moreover, that infamous all-star jam featuring every ex-Motörhead member is so poorly filmed (and edited, the credits actually obscure this vital cut) that it leaves one slightly, er, frustrated to say the least.

With the success of their recent tour and album ('Orgasmatron') I'm damned if I can fathom out why Motörhead should want to start releasing sub-standard product. Silly move, methinks.

DEREK OLIVER

***'SENSATIONAL ALEX HARVEY BAND LIVE'* (*SAHB Videos*)**

SALVAGED FROM a basement, so I'm led to believe, this video – perhaps the only remaining live film footage of SAHB – is a diamond in the rough, a battered and bruised artefact of *bona fide* brillance. Filmed in squalid black and white in a small club (Syracuse, Upstate New York), this video documents in a gripping rough 'n' tumble manner SAHB coming to terms with a near apathetic audience. Typically, Alex Harvey himself rises to such a challenge and literally pulls off a blinding performance taking time to include a number of his greatest songs from 'Faith Healer' to 'Framed'.

Yes, it's cheap but that's the beauty of this video and I'd even suggest it's perhaps the most watchable long-form music programme currently available.

DEREK OLIVER

{KOMIX}

LAST AUGUST saw the ever-expanding *Virgin* empire branching out into yet another avenue of communication: COMICS. Something of a throwback to their roots (*ie.* a single record shop), this incursion into the world of graphic art started off demurely enough with the opening of a comics stand in the Oxford Street Megastore under the guiding hand of Paul Coppin.

While we may safely assume that *Virgin* haven't entered the comics retail field because of an altruistic desire to provide us rock 'n' comix fans with an easy place to indulge both passions, it is interesting to note their realisation that there *is* money to be made in the industry. Comix are currently undergoing something of a boom and with no shortage of new talent on the market now seems a better time than most to get in on the act.

Paul Coppin is passionately devoted to the medium of comix. He runs stalls in Kensington Market, Camden Market (on a Sunday!) and now the *Virgin Comics* stand. Paul's aim with *Virgin Comics* is to bring graphic storytelling "out of the backstreets and on to a wider audience." Adopting a "high-profile position" (and let's face it, you can't get much more high-profile than the Megastore!), the intention is not only to increase the audience for comix but also educate people into accepting that this is far from just a 'kiddies' entertainment.

Naturally, the 12 to 18-year-old market is the largest, but after that it tapers off dramatically. Why? I suspect (and here I speak from personal experience) because both parental and peer disapproval play a significant role in making teenagers stop reading comix. Comix, after all, are for kids, right? And, really, you ought to stop buying them at your age.

WRONG!

"We're trying to talk people into buying comix because once they stop and look at them, and we can talk to them about comix, they see that there ARE exciting things happening in comix and they should be giving them a try!"

Those 'exciting thing' are manifold, but essentially it entails comix reaching out and finding a whole new adult audience. Maybe those same people who, like me, grew up reading comix but whose demands are now far higher, both in terms of script and art. Or maybe it's people who stopped buying comix years ago for one reason or another, but who can now be enticed back to the fold. Or maybe it's people who have never considered buying comix before but are discovering a form of graphic storytelling of a vastly superior nature.

Whatever anyone's reasons for buying comix, there are a lot of exciting areas currently on display. Paul suggests that such titles as "*Watchmen*, *Dark Knight* and *American Flagg* can make all the difference. Things started to change (for the better) around 1983 when what got me back into comix was picking up the *Pacific Comics* titles, and the *First Comics* (two of the major independent publishers, although *Pacific* now appears to have gone to the wall) like *American Flagg*, *Alien Worlds* and *Twisted Tales*. I could see then that there was a new beginning."

Also a new beginning for comix retailing. Now that Paul has established himself as *Virgin Comics* there are no less than four comix retail outlets within easy walking distance of each other; *Virgin*, *Forbidden Planet* (who recently celebrated their eighth anniversary), *Comic Showcase* (recently moved to larger premises) and *Gosh!*.

AS IN the record industry, the rise of the independent comix publishers shook up the mainstream comix industry, who started to produce work of a higher quality than had previously been seen.

Comix are also big business. *Marvel*'s *X-Men*, currently (and for some time) the most popular comic produced, sells in excess of 250,000 copies a month. Now at 75 cents (UK price: 40p) it doesn't need a mathematical genius to figure out that this title is grossing a lot of money.

Comix can also prove a great investment. If you happen to possess a copy of *Action # 1*, the pre-WWII first ever appearance of Superman, you'd be sitting on a comic worth around 25,000 dollars. Bringing that a little more up to date, if you happened to buy a copy of *Swamp Thing # 21*, the award-winning 'Anatomy Lesson' issue by Alan Moore, which cost 25p in 1984, you could now get up to £20 for it!

Business is business, after all, and Paul has long wanted to throw in comix with the rock world, there being a not inconsiderable cross-over market.

"We built up the business (through the market stalls) and then approached the people at *Virgin* head office, showed them the comix and told them what we wanted to do; basically, they liked the idea. I was impressed by their no-nonsense attitude. They said 'Yes', and things started moving straight away."

Virgin Comics are now a reality and, as with their other ventures, if the retail side takes off successfully enough they may pursue plans to move into comix publishing themselves – obviously not a huge step considering that *Virgin Books* are already an on-going publishing concern, but an exciting prospect nonetheless. Helping to kick off the project were Alan Grant, *2000AD* writer, and Brian Bolland, a former *2000AD* artist currently working on the revised *Batman* as part of the 'British Invasion' now flooding the American comix market. Even cable TV channel *Music Box* rolled out the cameras for the event!

Watch out, too, for a new British title, *Borderline*, due out before the end of the year. More on that shortly, and more on some of the titles already mentioned here; we'll also be focussing in on new comix as they appear, and the British comix scene in general, as well as all the relevant books, films, *etc*, not forgetting the people who create them.

DAVE DICKSON

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1 VINNIE VINCENT INVASION **Vinnie Vincent Invasion** (Chrysalis)
2 ILLUSIONS **Aaronsrod** (Roadrunner)
3 ROCK THE NATIONS **Saxon** (EMI)
4 WANTS YOU **Rough Cutt** (Warner Brothers)
5 RULER OF THE WASTELAND **Chastain** (Roadrunner)
6 CONVICTED **Cryptic Slaughter** (Roadrunner)
7 BLOOD RED **Tattoo** (Rude)
8 IF WE HAD BRAINS WE'D BE DANGEROUS **Impaler** (Combat)
9 ONLY THE WIND **Vengeance** (CBS)
10 SOMEWHERE IN TIME **Iron Maiden** (EMI)
11 UNKNOWN SOLDIERS **War Machine** (Neat)
12 ETERNAL DEVASTATION **Destruction** (Metal Blade)
13 RECOGNIZE NO AUTHORITY **Détente** (Roadrunner)
14 HELL IN A NIGHTMARE **Smash Hits** (Celesta)
15 TRILOGY **Yngwie J. Malmsteen** (Polydor)
16 SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT **Original Sin** (Roadrunner)
17 FIGHT TO SURVIVE **White Lion** (Grand Slam)
18 THE YELLOW AND BLACK ATTACK **Stryper** (Enigma)
19 IN THE DARKNESS **Paul Chain Violet Theatre** (Minotauro)
20 METALIZED **Sword** (Aquarius)
21 BANGIN' ON DRUMS **Zero Nine** (Megaton)
22 ONE FOOT IN HELL **Cirith Ungol** (Roadrunner)
23 QR III **Quiet Riot** (Epic)
24 FIGHTING BACK **Paul Di'Anno's Battlezone** (Raw Power)
25 KEEPER OF THE FLAME **Deaf Dealer** (Roadrunner)
26 RIDERS OF DOOM **Deathrow** (Noise)
27 NIGHT SONGS **Cinderella** (Vertigo)
28 SCARRED FOR LIFE **Obsession** (Enigma)
29 INVADERS **Bitches Sin** (King Klassik)
30 EVERY STORY NEEDS ANOTHER **Picture** (Back Door)

Compiled by Shock Rock *Heavy Metal radio programme, Padova, Italy.*

Anyone wishing to have their local chart published should send a copy to: ***Kerrang! Charts, Greater London House, Hampstead Rd, London NW1 7QZ.***

INDIE METAL

1 4 WHEN THE MIRROR CRACKS **Q5** (Music For Nations)
2 — DOOMSDAY FOR THE DECEIVER **Flotsam & Jetsam** (Roadrunner)
3 2 HIGH PRIEST OF LOVE **Zodiac Mindwarp & The Love Reaction** (Food)
4 1 SPREADING THE DISEASE **Anthrax** (Music For Nations)
5 7 RIDE THE LIGHTNING **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
6 6 MASTER OF PUPPETS **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
7 8 THRILL OF A LIFETIME **King Kobra** (FM/Revolver)
8 — RULER OF THE WASTELAND **Chastain** (Roadrunner)
9 10 FISTFUL OF METAL **Anthrax** (Music For Nations)
10 9 COLLECTION **Hawkwind** (Castle Communications)
11 3 ON A STORYTELLER'S NIGHT **Magnum** (FM)
12 — LOOK WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN **Poison** (Music For Nations)
13 5 KILL 'EM ALL **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
14 16 COMPLETELY WAYSTED **Waysted** (Raw Power)
15 15 ANIMAL MAN **Rogue Male** (Music For Nations)
16 11 CONVICTED **Cryptic Slaughter** (Roadrunner)
17 14 LAND OF THE GUN **Legs Diamond** (Music For Nations)
18 18 ANTHOLOGY **Magnum** (Raw Power)
19 12 THE MURDERESS METAL ROAD SHOW **Lizzy Borden** (Roadrunner)
20 17 DANGER ZONE **Doc Holliday** (Metal Masters)

STAR CHOICE

DAVID T. CHASTAIN
'MASTER OF PUPPETS' Metallica (Music For Nations)
'WASTED YEARS' Iron Maiden (EMI 45)
'WINGS OF DESTINY' Fifth Angel (track from the 'Fifth Angel' LP on Roadrunner)

PAUL SAMSON (EMPIRE)
'SHAKING LIKE A HUMAN' Kim Mitchell (Alert)
'SLIPPERY WHEN WET' Bon Jovi (Vertigo)
'EAT 'EM AND SMILE' David Lee Roth (Warner Brothers)

KEV WYNN (TYSONDOG)
'YANKEE ROSE' David Lee Roth (Warner Brothers 45)
'YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME' Bon Jovi (Vertigo 45)
'GOOD ENOUGH' Van Halen (track from the '5150' LP on Warner Brothers)

US HM RADIO

1 — SOMEWHERE IN TIME **Iron Maiden** (Capitol)
2 1 RAGE FOR ORDER **Queensrÿche** (EMI America)
3 4 TRILOGY **Yngwie J. Malmsteen** (Polydor)
4 2 VINNIE VINCENT INVASION **Vinnie Vincent Invasion** (Chrysalis)
5 3 NIGHT SONGS **Cinderella** (Mercury)
6 6 METAL OF HONOR **TT Quick** (Island/Megaforce)
7 13 NASTY NASTY **Black 'N Blue** (Geffen)
8 — PEACE SELLS . . . BUT WHO'S BUYING? **Megadeth** (Capitol)
9 — ORGASMATRON **Motörhead** (Profile)
10 — DANCING UNDERCOVER **Ratt** (Atlantic)
11 8 LOOK WHAT THE CAT DRAGGED IN **Poison** (Enigma/Capitol)
12 5 SLIPPERY WHEN WET **Bon Jovi** (Mercury)
13 7 SCARRED FOR LIVE **Obsession** (Enigma)
14 14 MASTER OF PUPPETS **Metallica** (Elektra)
15 20 FIGHT TO SURVIVE **White Lion** (Grand Slam Records)
16 19 SHOT IN THE DARK **Great White** (Capitol)
17 — FIGHTING BACK **Paul Di'Anno's Battlezone** (Shatter)
18 — RULER OF THE WASTELAND **Chastain** (Shrapnel)
19 — ROCK THE NATIONS **Saxon** (Capitol)
20 — BRAIN DEATH **Nuclear Assault** (Combat)

Compiled by Gail Flug, hard rock co-ordinator for the CMJ Music Report

IMPORTS

1 THE DARK **Metal Church** (Elektra)
2 COMIN' OUT FIGHTING **Sinner** (Noise)
3 TRILOGY **Yngwie J. Malmsteen** (Polydor)
4 DON'T GET MAD GET EVEN **Victory** (Metronome)
5 ENOUGH IS ENOUGH **Billy Squier** (Capitol)
6 FIGHT TO SURVIVE **White Lion** (Grand Slam)
7 SONRISA SALVAJA **David Lee Roth** (Warner Brothers)
8 METALIZED **Sword** (Aquarius)
9 MENACE TO SOCIETY **Lizzy Borden** (Metal Blade/Capitol)
10 FIELDS OF FIRE **Corey Hart** (EMI America)

MEGA METAL 4

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ON SALE OCTOBER 31

SINGLES

1	3	IN THE ARMY NOW **Status Quo** (Vertigo)
2	2	TO BE A LOVER **Billy Idol** (Chrysalis)
3	—	SHORT CUT TO SOMEWHERE **Fish/Tony Banks** (Virgin)
4	—	HE'S BACK (THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK) **Alice Cooper** (MCA)
5	8	95 – NASTY **WASP** (Capitol)
6	7	VELCRO FLY **ZZ Top** (Warner Brothers)
7	9	IN TOO DEEP **Genesis** (Virgin)
8	1	WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER **Queen** (EMI)
9	4	WASTED YEARS **Iron Maiden** (EMI)
10	6	ONE GREAT THING **Big Country** (Mercury)
11	5	YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME **Bon Jovi** (Vertigo)
12	—	WHOLE NEW WORLD **It Bites** (Virgin)
13	11	MADHOUSE **Anthrax** (Island)
14	15	IN THE SHAPE OF A HEART **Jackson Browne** (Elektra)
15	10	ROCK 'N' ROLL MERCENARIES **Meat Loaf with John Parr** (Arista)
16	12	WILD CHILD **Zodiac Mindwarp & The Love Reaction** (Food)
17	—	AMANDA **Boston** (MCA)
18	18	JUMP IN THE FIRE **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
19	23	WAITING FOR THE NIGHT **Saxon** (EMI)
20	20	ALL THE LOVE IN THE WORLD **The Outfield** (CBS)
21	14	GONNA GET CLOSE TO YOU **Queensrÿche** (EMI America)
22	13	YOU SHOOK ME ALL NIGHT LONG **AC/DC** (Atlantic)
23	16	YANKEE ROSE **David Lee Roth** (Warner Brothers)
24	19	SLEDGEHAMMER **Peter Gabriel** (Virgin)
25	17	LONELY NIGHT **Magnum** (Polydor)
26	21	INVISIBLE TOUCH **Genesis** (Virgin)
27	22	CALLING ALL THE HEROES **It Bites** (Virgin)
28	25	I'LL BE OVER YOU **Toto** (CBS)
29	24	CORONACH **Jethro Tull/David Palmer** (Chrysalis)
30	28	WHEN THE HEART RULES THE MIND **GTR** (Arista)

ALBUMS

1	3	SOMEWHERE IN TIME **Iron Maiden** (EMI)
2	—	THIRD STAGE **Boston** (MCA)
3	1	VIGILANTE **Magnum** (Polydor)
4	2	SLIPPERY WHEN WET **Bon Jovi** (Vertigo)
5	5	A KIND OF MAGIC **Queen** (EMI)
6	8	IN THE ARMY NOW **Status Quo** (Vertigo)
7	4	ROCK THE NATIONS **Saxon** (EMI)
8	9	BROTHERS IN ARMS **Dire Straits** (Vertigo)
9	6	INDISCREET **FM** (Portrait)
10	35	WHEN THE MIRROR CRACKS **Q5** (Music For Nations)
11	—	BLIND BEFORE I STOP **Meat Loaf** (Arista)
12	11	SO **Peter Gabriel** (Virgin)
13	—	NASTY NASTY **Black 'N Blue** (Geffen)
14	—	THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SUPERTRAMP **Supertramp** (A&M)
15	13	INVISIBLE TOUCH **Genesis** (Virgin)
16	19	GREATEST HITS **Queen** (EMI)
17	—	EYE OF THE ZOMBIE **John Fogerty** (Warner Brothers)
18	32	THE BIG LAD IN THE WINDMILL **It Bites** (Virgin)
19	12	7800° FAHRENHEIT **Bon Jovi** (Vertigo)
20	—	DOOMSDAY FOR THE DECEIVER **Flotsam & Jetsam** (Roadrunner)
21	21	AFTERBURNER **ZZ Top** (Warner Brothers)
22	7	VINNIE VINCENT INVASION **Vinnie Vincent Invasion** (Chrysalis)
23	18	HIGH PRIEST OF LOVE **Zodiac Mindwarp & The Love Reaction** (Food)
24	22	NIGHT SONGS **Cinderella** (Vertigo)
25	20	BON JOVI **Bon Jovi** (Vertigo)
26	17	SPREADING THE DISEASE **Anthrax** (Music For Nations)
27	10	EAT 'EM AND SMILE **David Lee Roth** (Warner Brothers)
28	16	TRUE AS STEEL **Warlock** (Vertigo)
29	26	RATT **Ratt** (Atlantic)
30	39	RIDE THE LIGHTNING **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
31	—	VINTAGE MAGNUM **Magnum** (Jet)
32	37	MASTER OF PUPPETS **Metallica** (Music For Nations)
33	25	POWERSLAVE **Iron Maiden** (EMI)
34	36	5150 **Van Halen** (Warner Brothers)
35	14	FAHRENHEIT **Toto** (CBS)
36	15	THE SPORT OF KINGS **Triumph** (MCA)
37	31	LIVE AFTER DEATH **Iron Maiden** (EMI)
38	43	ALCHEMY **Dire Straits** (Vertigo)
39	40	ORGASMATRON **Motörhead** (GWR Records)
40	28	ON A STORYTELLER'S NIGHT **Magnum** (FM)
41	23	THE SEER **Big Country** (Mercury)
42	27	HEART **Heart** (Capitol)
43	42	THE ULTIMATE SIN **Ozzy Osbourne** (Epic)
44	29	RAGE FOR ORDER **Queensrÿche** (EMI America)
45	—	RULER OF THE WASTELAND **Chastain** (Roadrunner)
46	33	UNDER LOCK AND KEY **Dokken** (Elektra)
47	re	FISTFUL OF METAL **Anthrax** (Music For Nations)
48	—	BROTHERS **Brian Spence** (Polydor)
49	24	THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST **Iron Maiden** (EMI Price Attack)
50	—	THIS SIDE OF PARADISE **Rik Ocasek** (Geffen)

PLAYLIST

MALCOLM 'HI, ANNETTE' DOME
'VIGILANTE' Magnum (Polydor)
'DRIVE ME CRAZY' Ratt (track from the 'Dancing Undercover' LP on Atlantic)
'RUNNING THE ENDLESS MILE' John Parr (London)

XAVIER 'WHERE'S THE CREATURE?' RUSSELL
'THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE' Agent Steel (track from 'The Unstoppable Force' LP on Music For Nations)
'STILL SEARCHING' Agent Steel (ditto)
'THE DAY AT GUYANA' Agent Steel (ditto)

STEVE 'SCI-FI HAS-BEEN' JOULE
'WHIPLASH SMILE' Billy Idol (Chrysalis)
'KICK OUT THE JAMS' Afrika Bambaataa (track from the 'Beware The Funk Is Everywhere' LP on Tommy Boy)
'BUY A GUN' Crazy Head (demo)

DANTE 'BRING ME THE HEAD/KOPY OF DICKSON' BONUTTO
'WILD FRONTIER' Gary Moore (track from forthcoming album on 10 Records)
'VIOLENCE & BLOODSHED' Manowar (track from the 'Fighting The World' album on Atco)
'WHIPLASH SMILE' Billy Idol (Chrysalis)

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STYX-MAN JY: up, up and away with the *Guild* 'Aviator'

IT'S PROBABLY fair to say that the name *Guild* is usually associated with acoustic and semi-acoustic guitars, the latter no doubt thought of as 'jazz' guitars. But with several new solid-body models coming along this old association looks set to disappear or at least be undermined.

It's perhaps an embarrassing admission to make, but this is the first *Guild* I've ever played, though I did once plonk about for a couple of minutes on a *Guild* 'Novatone' bass belonging to Sting's bassist Darryl Jones. (*Name dropper! – Ed*)

Although they've been going for quite some time – 1952 was the year the company started – these American-made instruments have, in recent years, been difficult to get hold of in the UK. Now they are being brought into this country by *Blue Suede Music* and, if you've got the cash, you owe it to yourself to check them out if the 'Aviator' indicates the quality of their range.

Looks nice, dunnit? Pink body, ivory-coloured scratch plate (the 'Vintage' look), black hardware – all *very* classy. I'm fed up using the term, but the body is, I suppose, best described as *Strat*-shaped.

The neck is a real beaut. *Jackson*-ish headstock, very dark (ebony, I think) fingerboard, 22 frets of medium gauge and fairly flat, very nicely finished, and great to play.

Width-wise, the neck is exactly the same as a *Strat* – give or take the thickness of a coat of paint – and feels pretty close too in terms of depth and contour. But unlike the *Strat* the neck is fitted at a slight angle to the body – towards the player when you've got it around your neck. This means you can set the strings at a low action even when the bridge saddles are lifted as high as they'll go.

For hardware *Guild* have chosen some of the best: a *Kahler* tremolo bridge system, *Grover* machines for smooth, accurate tuning even if you *didn't* have the *Kahler* fine-tuners and locking nut (which, of course, you have) and *EMG* pick-ups – *well* tasty!

And the *sound* is brilliant. Whatever pick-up configuration you choose the sound fairly bristles with superb response and aggressive 'attack'; the sustain is excellent and the pure, desirable sounds that burst forth from this instrument are some of the best I've heard (from a guitar, anyway) in quite a while. On the lower strings in particular, there's no problem getting clear, strong harmonies at just about every fret position. I'm not going to give unnecessary descriptions of the sounds from all the different pick-up combinations, suffice it to say that everything this guitar puts out is *very* good.

*EMG*s are, it seems, all that they're cracked up to be. And the 'Aviator' has three – a single-coil in the neck and middle positions, and a beefy twin-coil job in the bridge position. Controls are a five-position pick-up selector, volume and a tone knob which also pulls out (almost off!) to convert the bridge pick-up to single-coil operation.

Whereas the volume control gives a pretty 'linear' response, the tone knob (apart from being loose) is a bit of a disappointment in operation. From fully anti-clockwise (full bass), the first fraction of rotation produces enough tone change to sound as if you've switched pick-ups, and the rest of the rotation does naff all. But, without trying to defend the fact that the tone control is pretty useless, the sounds from the various pick-up combinations make a tone control on this particular guitar fairly redundant anyway.

Overall, the *Guild* 'Aviator' is an excellent instrument, and it's a shame that a silly little tone pot should prevent me being able to call it 'faultless'. But with such a superb sound I can't help but feel enthusiastic for its potential. I'm inclined to say that even at this price it's . . . dare I say it? It's probably worth it. There, I've said it now. By the way, you get a case for the price, too.

(Enquiries: ***Blue Suede Musical Products*** – Tel: **Doncaster (0302) 841274**)

PAUL HENDERSON

Pic Ray Palmer

ZODIAC MINDWARP would appear to have come a little unstuck. Mr. Mindwarp was snapped up by *Phonogram Records* a couple of months back for the princely sum of £175,000 plus recording costs, plus (and most importantly) the first 18 copies of the *'Silver Surfer'* comic!! Well, before Zodiac has so much as sniffed a recording studio, word has it he's been given the boot by **The Love Reaction,** *his* band!

An incredulous *Kerrang!* hack asked Zodiac how this was possible, to which he replied that the parting of the ways had come about as a direct result of the boys in the group not being paid. But what happened to the £175,000?

"Spent it," said Zodiac.

Spent it?! On what?!

"On toys and comics!" quoth The Mindwarp. Since the money has disappeared on essentials such as these the band's wages also went the same way. No wages, no band.

Quite where this leaves Zodiac Mindwarp in terms of his deal and his up-coming, just confirmed support slot with **Alice Cooper** (with whom Zody is pictured above) on the latter's UK tour remains in the realms of mystery. The official word from both management and record company is: "No comment!"

Meanwhile, takings are said to be up by 103 per cent at London's *Forbidden Planet*, Zody's favourite comic haunt!!

SO, HERE he is again, that 'Wild, Rampaging Rocker' first featured in *VFTB* issue 129. Remember, we asked you to identify him, with a prize of an album (starring this 'Maniac') going to *anyone* and *everyone* who picked the right name. Well, we had loads of entries, but very few got near the correct answer.

So to put you out of your misery, the man in question is . . . **Andy Taylor,** former guitarist with **D**** D****** and **The Power Station,** now embarking on a solo career that actually promises to be rather rocky! Those select few lucky (or astute) enough to name young Andy will be getting their prizes soon.

Tyger Tyger

BACK IN *Mayhem* issue 126 new band **Tyger Tyger** asked for budding artists to send in suggestions for a suitable logo, with the lucky winner having their entry selected for use on all official gumph. Well, above is the winning piece of artwork, designed by **Michael Fearnley** from Bradford. **'Krusher' Joule** was unavailable for comment on this effort, but all *we've* got to say is that having seen some of the rather pathetic logos chosen by certain high an' mighty bands (who mentioned **ELP**?!), this is a work of veritable genius.

Incidentally, all entries received by the group (featuring lead vocalist **Jess Cox** and guitarist **Rob Weir**) are to be printed on the centrespread of the next edition of *Leadweight*, the official magazine of Tyger Tyger's record company *Neat*, and also on the inner sleeve of the band's debut album, titled **'On The Prowl'** and due out imminently.

ANTHRAX HAVE become the first rock band, at least as far as we know, to conclude a deal with a skateboard company. No kiddin', you'll soon be able to purchase customised Anthrax skateboards through the *Skull Skates* organisation. Sounds like a right hoot to us.

THOSE VERY nice boyz **Shy** have been busily working on their second album for *RCA* in Amsterdam with American producer **Neil Kernon**. And they're very near to completing the basic recording, after which the tapes will be flown to London for mixing, probably at *Red Bus Studios*.

The LP doesn't yet have a title, but it should be out early next year and we're assured that it features a (gaspo! Shockaroonie!!) **Riff Pilchard** number. No-one is prepared to reveal exactly which song they've covered, but we at *VFTB* are putting our meagre money on **'Devil Woman'**. Moreover, the Brummie mob apparently wanted **Sue Barker**'s ex-boyfriend to guest on the cut, though sadly he declined. Was it the size of Shy vocalist **Tony Mills**' renowned ego that put the evangelist off his stroke?

And whilst we're on the Shy front, do you know what they missed more than *anything else* whilst incarcerated in Holland? No, not Page Three of *The Sun*, nor **Del Boy Oliver**'s expansive prose, not even the cricket results. No, when an *RCA* representative asked them what they'd like him to bring out from England when he paid a visit to the studios the band's reply was simple and unanimous: frozen curry and cans of *Castlemaine XXXX*. Now we understand why Riff didn't wanna know!

KARTOON KORNER

"HELLO DUCKY!"

ROBIN GEORGE

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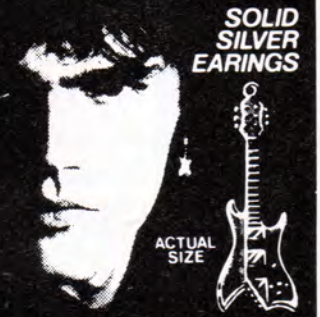

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SHORT

reviewed by HOWARD JOHNSON

IRON MAIDEN: 'Stranger In A Strange Land' (EMI)
The most swashbuckling cut from the new 'Somewhere In Time' album and a bit of a corker. It's always satisfying to see a rock band who can crack the charts on their *own* terms, but why oh why do we have to suffer a cover of FM's 'That Girl' on the B-side? Painful!

Incidentally, a limited edition of the 7" version of 'Stranger . . .' is packaged in a poster bag which unfolds to 21" x 14" and features exclusive live shots on one side with a reproduction of the Derek Riggs artwork for the single sleeve on the reverse side.

The extra track on the 12" is 'Juanita'.

TIL TUESDAY: 'What About Love' (Epic)
The acceptable face of AOR – and not just the blonde on the sleeve! Sounds like The Pretenders with a bit of a raw guitar merchant! Not extraordinary, but possibly seductive under candle light!

THE BIG MUSIC: 'Cold Emotion' (RCA)
Very It Bites-ish. Owes a lot to Seventies Prog Rock but treated with all the studio gadgetry which makes a single chart-orientated these days. I can't understand why this krap gets into *Kerrang!*, but I've seen Malcolm in an It Bites T-shirt so who am I to argue? Plus points, though, for a Dylan cover on the B-side.

KATRINA AND THE WAVES: 'Lovely Lindsey' (Capitol)
Crap, sheer unadulterated rubbish! Very, very average pop, but again, someone at *Kerrang!* seems to like 'em. Beats the hell outta me as to why!

JOHN FOGERTY: 'Eye Of The Zombie' (Warner Brothers)
Swamp Rock as adored by *Radio One*'s Andy Kershaw. All very interesting if you're into beaver hunting (not *that* kind, 'Krusher'!) but it doesn't scare the s**t outta me! Give me 'An American Werewolf In London' anytime!

EUROPE: 'The Final Countdown' (Epic 12")
Wimpo Europa! Europe once knew about grooving, laying down some kick-ass potential, *etc, etc.* Now they seem content to go with the AOR flow. Trouble is boys, the tide's going heavily in the opposite direction these days – and you've missed the boat!

RIC OCASEK: 'Emotion In Motion' (Geffen)
Typical Ocasekian ballad that sounds horribly like something I can't quite put my finger on. Hardly rad., but quite pleasant in a 35-year-old, American, ageing AORer sorta fashion.

GENE LOVES JEZEBEL: 'Desire (Come And Get It)' (Beggar's Banquet 12")
The Jezebels try for hit single status again with their best song. Peter Walsh has employed the 'nice button' extensively, and although there's no denying the calibre of the song, I still believe that the original version is the definitive one. But that's not to say this wasn't a wise move, so file under 'hit'!

THE SAINTS: 'Temple Of The Lord' (Polydor)
The Saints were one of the most underrated bands from the punk epoch, but this Hugh Jones-produced effort sounds decidedly drab in comparison to the stuff they produced when they were 'relevant'.

SNOWY WHITE: 'That Certain Thing' (Island)
Poor Snowy must have gone through hell playing all that raunchy stuff in Lizzy cos this is blandola pap that my mum (bless 'er!) would absolutely adore. I think it's baloney, but then again I'm a young man, I wouldn't be expected to like it!

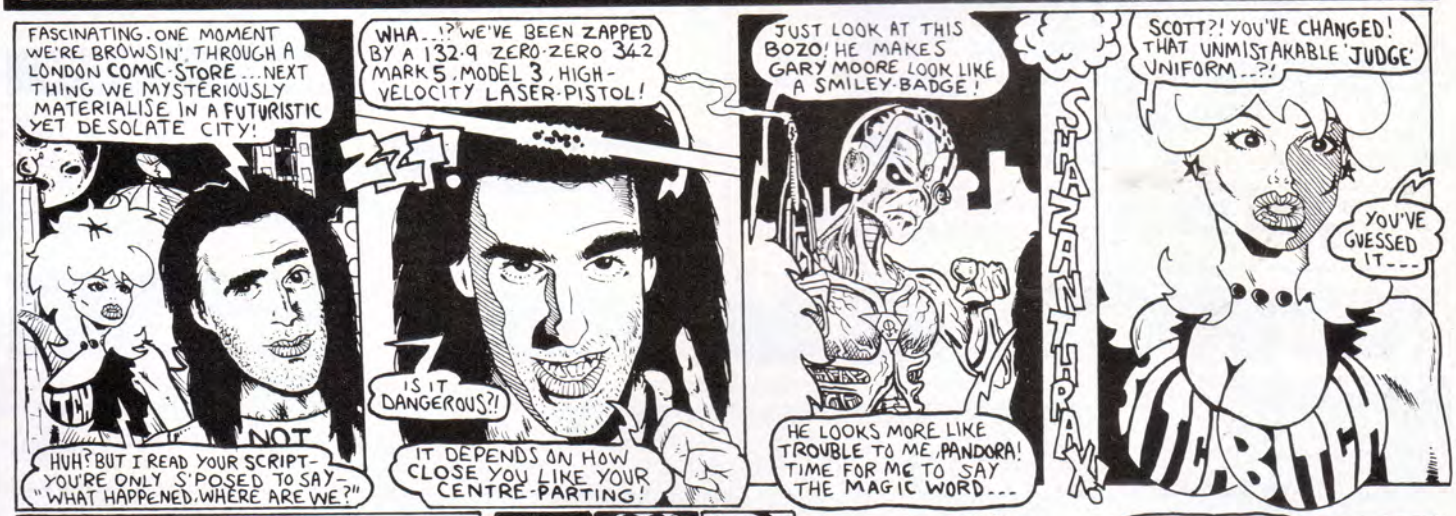
GREGG PARKER: 'Black Dog' (MEC)
I don't go for cover versions as a rule, but then again, rules *are* made to be broken and yer man Gregg has come up with a corking version of the old Zep classic here. Probably not a hit but it should wow those who are *au fait* with Metal – and rightly so!

GREGG PARKER: Barking up the right tree . . .

PETER GABRIEL & KATE BUSH: 'Don't Give Up' (Virgin)
Dante said, 'Turn it off'. I did!

IT BITES: 'Whole New World' (Virgin)
Ditto!

PANDORA PEROXIDE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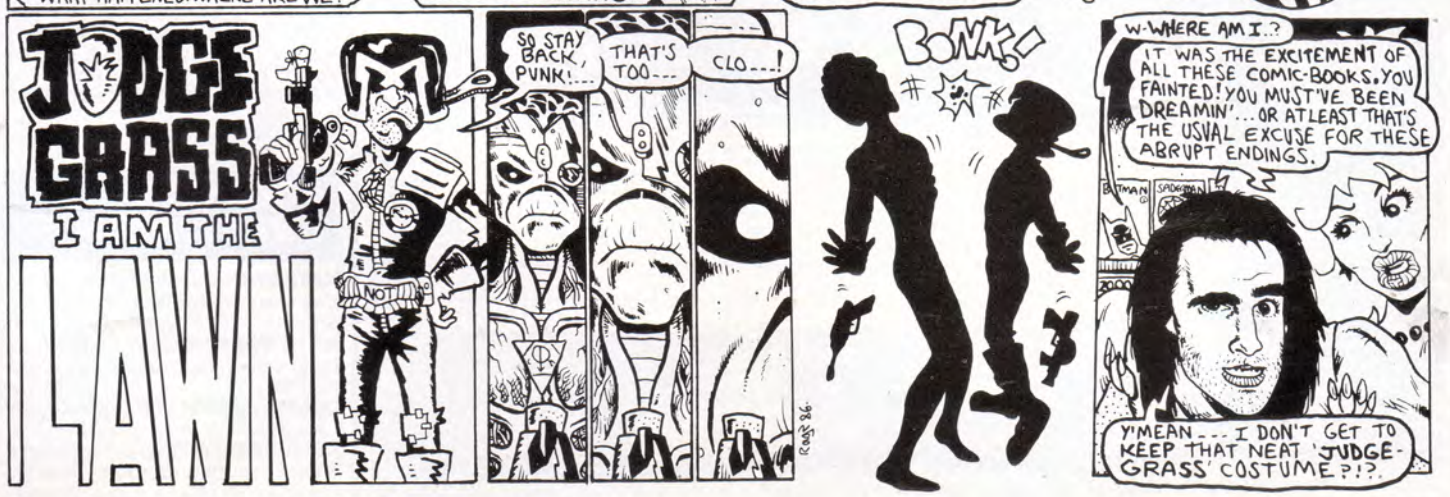
YOU'VE GUESSED IT...
SCANALYZER!
TITBITCH


JUDGE GRASS
I AM THE
LAWN
SO STAY BACK, PUNK!...
THAT'S TOO...
CLO...!
BONK!
W-WHERE AM I..?
IT WAS THE EXCITEMENT OF ALL THESE COMIC-BOOKS. YOU FAINTED! YOU MUST'VE BEEN DREAMIN'... OR ATLEAST THAT'S THE USUAL EXCUSE FOR THESE ABRUPT ENDINGS.
Y'MEAN... I DON'T GET TO KEEP THAT NEAT 'JUDGE-GRASS' COSTUME?!?

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MEAT LOAF (above) will be playing the following UK dates next year: Brighton Centre February 14/15, Birmingham NEC 18/19, Edinburgh Playhouse 21/22, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne City Hall 24/25, Bournemouth International Centre 28, Wembley Arena March 1/2.

Tickets for all venues are on sale now at the respective box offices. In addition, they can be purchased by post for Birmingham and Wembley.

Postal applications for Birmingham should be sent to: **Meat Loaf Concerts, PO Box 4, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 2JQ.** Tickets are priced at £9/£8 and all cheques/POs should be made payable to **'Meat Loaf Concerts'.** An SAE must be enclosed.

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STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN & DOUBLE TROUBLE were forced to cancel their mid-October UK dates due to Stevie Ray Vaughan himself being taken ill. It's hoped that all these dates will be re-scheduled for the New Year.

STATUS QUO have added another date to their forthcoming UK tour. This is at St. Austell Cornwall Coliseum on December 19. Tickets are priced at £8.50/£7.50.

IGGY POP will be appearing at Brixton Academy on December 17. Tickets are priced at £7.

DUMPY'S RUSTY NUTS will be appearing at Hereford Market Tavern November 1, Newbridge Memorial Hall 2, Oxford Corn Dolly 3, Poole Mr. C's 5, Woolwich Tramshed 6, Dunstable Queensway Hall 13, London Marquee Club 14/15, Bridport FC Club 21, Weymouth Verdis 22, Bristol Fleece & Firkin 23.

PALLAS, who are shortly to begin work with producer **Mick Glossop** on a new album, play shows at Colchester The Works November 6, Walthamstow Royal Standard 7, Wolverhampton Scruples 8.

PENDRAGON will be appearing at Nottingham University October 29, Aberystwyth University 31, Letchworth The Leys November 1, Bradford University 3, Liverpool Club Crackers 5, Plymouth Polytechnic 6, Cardiff Polytechnic Of Wales 7, Kent University 10, Norwich University Of East Anglia 11, Sheffield University 12, Glasgow Stirling University 13, Huddersfield Polytechnic 20, Birmingham University 26, London Astoria Theatre December 12.

JAVA play the following shows: Brentford Red Lion November 1, Covent Garden Rock Garden 4, London Studio Valbonne 17, Aldershot Prince's Hall December 3.

TREDEGAR play dates at Edinburgh Jailhouse October 29, Falkirk Burns Bar November 2, Spennymore Recreation Centre 3, Burton-On-Trent Central Park Hotel 8, Oxford Corn Dolly 10, Bournemouth 141 Club 14, Nottingham Mardi Gras 22.

EXCALIBUR will be appearing at Oldham Hurricane's October 30, Carlisle Stars & Stripes 31, Wishaw Heathery Bar November 1.

SAREAN QUARTAR play Hastings Crypt Club October 30, Crowborough Valentine Club November 6.

TYGER TYGER play the following shows: Walthamstow Royal Standard October 31. Billingham The Swan Hotel November 11, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Polytechnic 12 (with **She**), Carlisle Stars & Stripes 13, Prestwick The Red Lion 14, Kilmarnock Cheers 15, Shepherds Bush The Wellington 20, Nottingham Mardi Gras 29.

XCESS play Walthamstow Royal Standard October 31, Slough Town Football Club November 8 (*Slough Observer* Screening Appeal Charity concert), Walthamstow Royal Standard December 19.

The band have just recruited **Jason Gregory** (lead vocals) and **Nigel Teesdale** (bass).

RUNESTAFF play Melbourne Rock Club November 7, Norwich Bash For Cash 15, Northampton College Of Further Education 20.

HAZE have been forced to cancel all planned dates due to injuries sustained by the band during a recent road accident. It's hoped that the dates will be re-scheduled for December.

CHASAR, who have recruited lead vocalist **Ian Tate**, play Kilmarnock Cheers Club November 1, Falkirk Burns Bar 9, Edsal RAF Club 14.

THE REDBEARDS FROM TEXAS will be appearing at Burton-On-Trent Central Park Hotel November 1, Dudley JB's 2, Aston University 7, Birkenhead Stairways 8, Stourbridge Town Hall 20, Ayr Pavilion 28, Wishaw Heathery Bar 29, Stourport Town Hall December 9, Dudley JB's 20/21, Swansea The Pier 23.

The band issue a new single, **'Gudbye T'Jane'** (a cover of the **Slade** number)/**'Drinkin On A Saturday Nite'**, through the *Receiver* label on November 1.

CHARIOT play Bournemouth 141 Club November 7, Loughborough Town Hall 18.

DESOLATION ANGELS play Norwich The Barn October 31, Tonypandy Naval Club November 15.

NO SWEAT, from Northern Ireland, play Shepherds Bush The Wellington November 5, London Marquee Club 15.

FULL MOON play Hastings Carlisle Hotel October 31, Deptford The Crypt November 7, Nottingham Mardi Gras 13, Wimbledon William Morris Club 15, Bracknell Southill Arts Centre 20, Kingston Dolphin 21, Reading Cap & Gown 27, Liphook Royal Oak 29, Southampton Joiners Arms December 4, Sevenoaks The Cavern 12, Wimbledon William Morris Club 18, Dalston Crown & Castle 19, Kingston Dolphin 21, Morden Merton Library January 15.

FILTHY RICH, from St. Ives, play Nottingham Mardi Gras October 30, Cambridge Sea Cadet Hall November 1, Melbourne Rock Club 14, Huntingdon Waterloo 22.

GYPSY, from Scarborough, will be appearing at York Windmill October 31, Scarborough Theatre-In-The-Round November 30.

IDES OF MARCH, from Swindon, play dates at Brighton Old Vic November 17, Harlow Square One Club 20.

The band have just issued a 12" single, **'On The Face'**, through the *RS* label, with distribution by *Pinnacle*.

MOBIUS STRIP, from Worthing, play Worthing Glynn Owen Community Centre on November 8.

TRUFFLE will play shows at Hereford Market Tavern October 17, Tonypandy Naval Club 18, Llanharan Rugby Club 19.

MAD DOG, from Wales, have confirmed the following shows: Wrexham King's Arms October 30, Wrexham Eagle's Inn 31, Pontypridd The Pits November 1, Harlow Square One Club 6, Tonypandy Naval Club 29.

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NEW GUITAR MASTERS

Part Two of a major feature on the new breed of Guitar Heroes

DAVID T. CHASTAIN

'. . . Although David has never had a guitar lesson, he *has* practised on his own every day for the 16 years he's been associated with the instrument. . .'

"A GUITAR HERO?! Uh . . . well . . . I'm not really comfortable with that label, I don't feel like a hero. I just happen to play guitar the way I do, and if that pushes me to the forefront of modern-day rock guitar playing, then that's great."

So says David T. Chastain, the six-string sovereign of Cincinatti, a man who – despite being far more modest with his mouth than he is with his music – is being widely hailed as a leading figure in this so-called 'New Generation' of axeperts. Why, within these very leaves Boss Barton has raved about him, St. Sylvie has offered a definite 'thumbs up', I've twice awarded him Four-K kritiques . . . and even the unpretentious Harry Headbanger was once moved enough to claim that Chastain *'makes Yngwie Malmsteen sound like Nik Kershaw'*.

Yup, David *Taylor* Chastain ("I guess I'll let you have the scoop on my middle name!") is finally on the map, a decade or more after catching his first whiff of stardom with a band called Spike. Originally from Atlanta, Chastain joined Spike from a Progressive Rock outfit called Target, and spent some time churning out cover versions and similarly commercial original material before deciding on a heavier, more guitar-orientated direction. Fellow Spike members Mike Skimmerhorn and Les Sharp agreed, and on nabbing lead singer Russell Jinkens from another local band, Prizoner, CJSS was born.

However, by this time *Shrapnel Records* boss Mike Varney had a beady eye on Chastain, and approached him with a view to commissioning a solo album. The guitarist agreed and, with the backing of ex-Rude Girl vocalist (and former stripper) Leather, drummer Fred Coury and Skimmerhorn on bass, came up with the impressive 'Mystery Of Illusion' LP early in '85, under the simple monicker of Chastain.

Chastain (the man) then turned his attention to CJSS, recording the 'World Gone Mad' album for *Leviathan Records* (in America, *Black Dragon Records* in Europe); it was released to an encouraging reception early this year. But then, to confuse matters, he immediately set to work on another Chastain album with Leather, Skimmerhorn and new drummer Ken Mary at *Prairie Sun Studios* in California – the result being the spiffing, Summer-released 'Ruler Of The Wasteland' – and to finally crack everyone up he followed that by issuing the second CJSS album, 'Praise The Loud', in October!

"I CAN understand why everyone gets so confused," David admits, drawling down the line from a Cincinatti hotel room at an apparently unfamiliar hour of the morning, "every time an album comes out everyone wants to know why I've changed band members! But it's really quite simple. Mike Varney wanted me to do the solo album and put me in touch with some musicians for it; but I could never work with those people on a full-time basis because they live all over the country and none of us want to relocate. So we just get together once a year, record an album and then go off and do our own things; Leather, for example, is working on an album with Mike Varney right now, and Ken Mary is working with Alice Cooper, TKO and Fifth Angel."

And David is channelling his not inconsiderable efforts into CJSS, a band which to me at least sounds very similar to Chastain!

"Actually, I think there *are* musical differences between the two," David disagrees. "Chastain is a little more European, a little heavier and a little more mystical than CJSS, whereas CJSS is maybe a little more progressive and slightly more commercial."

Even so, the fact that David T. is the driving force behind both projects – writing all the music, most of the lyrics and having a major hand in production, as well as totally dominating the sound of both bands with his outstanding guitar work – ensures that the dividing line between them is very faint. Indeed, many of you may wonder what the point of having two such similar bands on the go at the same time is. What does Chastain get from each band (apart from money)?

"Well, I think I prefer listening to the Chastain albums," he considers, "because that type of music is the kind I really like to play. But the CJSS stuff is probably more fun and a bit more enjoyable to play. They both have their advantages, though overall I think I like the Chastain stuff the best, because I don't have to play it too often; it's like a mistress to me, I just flirt with it from time to time and please myself with it. I guess the CJSS stuff is more like a wife – I'm with it most of the time, there's this steady relationship . . ."

Chastain says he hopes he can keep this dual role of 'husband' and 'lover' going indefinitely, if only, I presume, to provide a twin-outlet for the enormous amount of material he writes. Despite having a huge backlog of songs, Chastain admits he continues to write incessantly ("Some people might not like the quality, but you can't argue with the quantity!" he laughs), supplying material for other artists as well as himself.

I wondered if he's able to accomodate some of this 'outside' material in CJSS's live set . . .

"Yes, we usually play around a 70-minute set including maybe two or three songs from the first Chastain album and perhaps one from the second, but the rest is CJSS material. I know that the crowds in Cincinatti can tell the difference – we're so popular around here it's amazing; we sell out the local 1,200-seater once a month! – but when we go elsewhere I'm not so sure that people are familiar with the two bands."

An interesting situation, and one which is bound to grow more intriguing with time. For example, what will happen if the Chastain albums shift more plastic than the CJSS releases? The mainman laughs at the thought of such an awkward predicament.

"Oh, I don't know if it'll come to that," he says, "but at the moment it *is* hard to tell which of the two bands is more popular. The first Chastain album did well, the first CJSS album did slightly better, the second Chastain album did slightly better than that . . . so now I'm waiting to see if the second CJSS album can sell even more than that and keep this snowballing situation going."

I WOULDN'T be surprised if it did, for the new CJSS offering, 'Praise The Loud' (reviewed by yours truly page 20), is certainly as good as anything David T. has done so far, even if it isn't quite a full stride forward from the last Chastain album, 'Ruler Of The Wasteland'. From torpedo trax like 'Land Of The Free' and 'Don't Play With Fire' through the epic-flavoured 'Citizen Of Hell' to the hurricane-force instrumental 'Thunder And Lightning', 'PLT' is a ton-heavy, top-notch Metal album, reminiscent in places of Dio, but stamped all over with David Chastain's characteristically cataclysmic axeploits. I think he likes it too.

"The new CJSS album is much better than the first one," he says, inevitably, "the vocal work is a lot stronger, everyone's playing is much better, and I think it's just a better all-round effort. The first CJSS LP, 'World Gone Mad', was almost a follow-on from the Chastain album, but this new CJSS release contains material written *specifically* for it."

Even so, there are a number of corresponding traits in Chastain and CJSS material – one of which would seem to be an apparent appreciation of anything 'Dio'. David, whilst maintaining that his two bands *are* noticably different, freely admits to the littl'un's influence.

"I liked the first coupla Sabbath albums, but I kinda fell outta touch with them till Dio joined," he explains, "and then it seemed like he brought them to life. 'Heaven And Hell' is one of my all-time favourite albums. In fact, I like anything by Dio – I really like the way he sings, the imagery he portrays and so on, and I'm a big fan of those epic-type songs he always seems to come up with. I guess we try to achieve the same kind of 'epic-y' atmosphere with our material, and if you think we have some kind of 'Dio feel' to our music then it means that we're achieving that."

As I've already mentioned, what David T. Chastain is also achieving right now is recognition as a Guitar Hero. There seems to be a new wave of said Heroes on the scene at the moment, so does David feel part of that movement?

"Well, I feel real strange being thought of as a Guitar Hero," he replies with typical modesty, "but yes, there does seem to be a new wave of guitar players coming to the forefront of the Metal scene and I guess I fall into that category. I suppose people are looking at me because I've got a lot of material coming out on record, and magazines are picking up on it and saying how great it is. But listen, I could send you a tape of that band Target and you'd hear that my playing then was pretty much the same as it is now; it's not as if I've only just learnt how to play like that.

"But I think it's a good thing that people are picking up on new guitar players. The musicians we're talking about here have newer influences – the older players would take their

influences from the early Seventies, whereas the newer ones will maybe draw from the late Seventies/early Eighties – and that kinda helps to keep things fresh."

What does David consider a Guitar Hero to be?

"Well, when someone mentions 'Guitar Hero' I think of a great innovator like Jimi Hendrix – someone who did something very creative which no-one had ever done before. I also think of Eddie Van Halen for the same reason, because he's the epitome of flash guitaring and no-one was doing what he does before he came out. Now, of course, there's a million guys copying him and you've got to look for players who're trying to do something different. I'm trying to play 'heavy fusion' guitar in my music, and hopefully that'll set me apart from all the others."

Heavy fusion?

"Yeah! There's a lot of great jazz-fusion guitar players out there – people like Allan Holdsworth, Al Dimeola and John McLaughlin – and I'm really into that stuff. What I'm trying to do is play their style of fusion guitar over a Metal backing. Holdsworth tried to do that to a certain degree years ago in a band called Tempest, and that's what I'm trying to do now."

And good luck to him. I don't know about you, but I find the blending of jazz and rock much more exciting than the rather pretentious mixture of classical music and rock that a certain guitarist whose name *isn't* Ritchie Blackmore (although it might as well be) is pursuing.

"I listen to lots of different kinds of music – including classical," says David, "but I find classical guitar very sterile. I think fusionistic guitar has a lot more feel to it and I've always been a big fan of players like Holdsworth. Since I've never had a guitar lesson in my life, I think I can say that I've pretty much developed me own style of playing and that I haven't emerged as a copy of anyone else. But I guess my style is more set in the fusionistic field than any other."

Pic Jerry Meeks

DAVID T. CHASTAIN: A self-taught heavy fusionist

ALTHOUGH DAVID has never had a guitar lesson, he *has* practised on his own every day for the 16 years he's been associated with the instrument. This strict programme includes a period of two to four hours *per* day alone as well as time spent with the band going over old and new material, so it's no surprise that he's reached such an admirable level of proficiency. But if he hasn't had formal guitar training, can he actually read music?

"Uh . . . no . . . well, I *can* to a certain degree," he ponders, sounding decidely unsure, "but I'm not that good at it. It takes me a while to work it out. I do wish I could read music properly – and I strongly advise every young player to take the time to learn – but I don't think it's hurt me too much because I've been able to develop my own style.

"Even though I can't read too good I'm pretty much 'up' on the technical and theory side," David continues. "I've studied a lot of compositional and music theory stuff, I know all the scales that exist – I think! – and I know how to relate them to chordal progression and stuff like that. I *am* a self-taught player, but I've worked real hard over the years to get to know the instrument as intimately as possible, and I'll continue to work hard at it . . . because no-one can ever be perfect."

What about Yngwie? (Only kidding Yng . . .) OK, so maybe the player can't ever be perfect, but can the guitar itself reach such a standard of faultlessness?

"Well, I've yet to come across the perfect guitar," says David, "although at the moment we're building a new kind of guitar here and I'll be interested to try that one out. I also have someone designing my pick-ups for me at the moment, so I'm always looking to improve the sound of the guitar. Right now, I prefer the sound of my *Kramer*, but I also have a *Gibson Les Paul* and a few specially made guitars."

So when are we Brits gonna get a chance to see him play the damn things this side of The Pond? Well, David says it'd be too difficult financially to bring CJSS to Europe at the moment; the band have a large stage show and aren't prepared to scale it down in order to cross the Atlantic, so they'll wait until their popularity in Europe is such that a trip across won't mean losing too much money.

MARK PUTTERFORD

KONTINUEZ PAGE 43

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MASTERS

FROM PAGE 41

STEVE VAI

'. . . Vai's playing on the 'Eat 'Em And Smile' album is quite spectacular – you daren't let your attention wander for a second in case you miss something. . .'

SO JUST who *is* the kurrent King Of The Kerrang! Khord, the Ruler Of Riffery, the Master Of Metallic Marksmanship? An intriguing issue over which many a classroom critic and pub preacher has deliberated throughout the years. And the beauty of it is, *everyone* is entitled to a drastically different opinion, and *no-one* is absolutely right; although at any given time in Heavy History you're bound to find half-a-dozen widely accepted hotshots sparring for the title, there never has been and never will be an ultimate judicial power. Just keep rooting for your favourite, kid, and let those Page vs. Blackmore, Schenker vs. Chapman, Rhoads vs. Lee and Moore vs. Van Halen decibel debates roll!

Right now, as we scan the arrivals lounge for the new crop of Guitar Heroes, the arguments over superiority are likely to be as personal and passionate as ever. Me? Well, my *Monopoly* money is stacked speaker-high on Steve Vai, that prodigy of plectrumship presently pulling jaws to floors in David Lee Roth's extraordinary outfit. OK, so Vai isn't *literally* a new face on the six-string scene – he was actually in Frank Zappa's band as 'long ago' as 1980 – but the fact that he only really shot to prominence after last year's brilliant 'Disturbing The Peace' album from Alcatrazz (the band he was in at the time) is more than a good excuse to feature him there. And after all, he IS the hottest guitar-slingin' upstart in town right now, isn't he?

Vai's professional career began when he was 'snapped up' by Frank Zappa after spending around two years at the Berkely School Of Music in California. He began working with Zappa in '79, officially joined his band the following year and during the next four recorded about ten records for him.

"You can record with Frank for about a week and you might be on the next ten records," he says. "He just keeps releasing tons of music!

"Working with Frank was very

KONTINUEZ OVER

Pic Neil Zlozower

STEVE VAI: 'The hottest guitar-slingin' upstart in town right now'

MASTERS

FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

challenging, it wasn't like a partnership or anything. It's a band in certain respects, but for the most part *he's* the boss and does everything. It's *his* ball of wax and you're just hired to do what he says."

However, Vai overcame his creative block by releasing two solo albums during his stint with Zappa, 'Flex-ible' and 'Flex-ible Leftovers'. Neither were definitive Vai albums – indeed, the best description of them comes from the man himself: "Weird!" – and Vai also admits that that material was only released "Because I had it lying around," but nevertheless they're worth keeping an eye out for. And if you've *really* been struck down with the Vai bug, keep your other eye out for the album he did a coupla years ago with The Epidemics – a pop project led by a chap called Al Shanker for which Steve supplied the appropriate digital dynamics.

But more familiar and indeed essential Vai vinyl is the aforementioned 'Disturbing The Peace', to my mind one of the best hard rock releases of '85. Anxious to replace Yngwie J. Malmsteen with a musician of similar talent, singer Graham Bonnet shrewdly ensnared Vai in Hollywood's *Cherokee Studios*, and together they composed every track on the album bar Vai's own 'Lighter Shade Of Green' instrumental. From the blistering bravado of 'God Blessed Video', 'Wire And Wood' and 'Stripper' to the majestic muscle of 'Mercy' and the sitar-stroked, Eastern-flavoured 'Desert Diamond', Vai was nothing short of sensational – staggeringly fast and fluent, and full of tricks.

VAI TOOK his 'wire and wood' wizardry on the road with Alcatrazz soon after, but his reputation was such that a number of 'name' artists began to seek his services – one of them being John Lydon of Public Image Ltd., who Steve agreed to help out on his current 'Album' album . . . if you see what I mean.

"They were in New York and I was on tour in Texas with Alcatrazz," Steve recalls, "So whenever I had a day off I would fly in and record that day, then fly back. I did the whole thing in about five days. It was very easy . . .

"That whole experience is such a great memory for me, and I did some of my best playing on that album as well. Johnny Rotten and I are brothers! He's a unique character and I really like him."

Steve remained in Bonnet's Alcatrazz for about a year, but became slightly disconcerted over the band's direction – "I wanted to develop it into something a little more interesting than commercial music . . but everybody was afraid" – and had no second thoughts about leaving when the call came from David Lee Roth.

"Ted Templeman had heard a tape of mine," Steve explains, "and he sent it on to Dave. When Dave finally called I was on my way out of the door to go to an Alcatrazz concert. I hear, 'Hey man, this is Dave Lee Roth! I'm putting a movie together and I need some tunes. Do you want to write something together?' I said, 'Sure!'

"I've been offered jobs in the past, but they just haven't been right. I remember when Randy Rhoads died and Ozzy was auditioning, but I felt it was too serious for me. Phil Mogg of UFO and I got together, but there was a certain comical balance that wasn't happening. Kiss were auditioning guitarists – that would have been fun – but once again it just wouldn't have been right for me. With David Lee Roth, though, I knew it was right. I thought, 'That's it man, this guy's a nut!' There wasn't a doubt in my mind."

Vai set to work helping Roth with his 'Crazy From The Heat' film project – composing material and playing a small part in the movie that never happened. Then it was time to 'Eat 'Em And Smile', the result being one of the year's finest rock albums, leaving Van Hagar's '5150' for dead.

Vai's playing on 'Eat 'Em . . .' is quite spectacular – you daren't let your attention wander for a second in case you miss something – and his lightning interplay with bassist Billy Sheehan has to be heard to be believed! Check out 'Shyboy' or 'Elephant Gun' and you'll be witnessing *the* most thrilling guitar/bass duo on the scene.

Somewhat inevitably though, Vai has been hit with Eddie Van Halen comparisons left, right and centre. Does that bother him?

"I'm ready for it," he admits. "But I think what will happen eventually is that those people will realise we are two different people. It's like when Randy Rhoads had his accident and died, the first guitarist to replace him for any length of time was Brad Gillis and people compared them a lot. They put Brad through the mill! With me, I think the shit will hit the fan for a year or so and then nobody will bother; people will fully respect me for what I do and, as always, respect Edward for what he does."

SO WHAT *is* the next step for Steve Vai? Well, apart from touring and preparing material for Roth's second album, he admits to having a number of different projects in the pipeline. For example, he's currently writing a book – "I'm packaging these 24 caprices, adapting them to the guitar and putting them in a guitar manuscript" – and composing material for some movies. (Unfortunately, though, he's had to decline an offer to do the film-score for Arnold 'Conan' Schwarzenegger's next movie). He's also going to deliver a "guitar solo album" to *Capitol Records* at some point in the foreseeable future, but maintains that his top priority is the Roth band "And it will be like that for a long time."

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AKIRA TAKASAKI

'. . . Like the other New Guitar Masters, Akira has the seemingly all-important speed, techniques like two-handed 'tapping' and an "Eighties sound" . . .'

JAPANESE BAND Loudness have been called a 'by numbers' assemblage of a heavy rock outfit – all the components there but somehow not quite right. But the band's Akira Takasaki is no 'by numbers' guitarist. In Akira, Japan has come up with perhaps the first of the 'real thing', an important development for that country when you consider that if everything mirrored the success of the Japanese electronics industry, to name just one, then in a few years it would be the land of the rising *stars* rather than rising sun.

Like the other New Guitar Masters, Akira has the seemingly all-important speed, techniques like two-handed 'tapping' and an 'Eighties sound'. He also has a keen sense of melody, no doubt a result of his early influences – Ritchie Blackmore, Eric Clapton and the late Paul Kossoff. Particular aspects of a guitarist's early influences are often difficult to detect once their playing has advanced and developed to the point of having their *own* style. But even on Loudness' most recent album, 'Lightning Strikes', Akira's precise, unhurried *vibrato* is still one facet of his playing which can be traced back to one of that technique's masters – Paul Kossoff.

But it was Blackmore who had the biggest effect on the young Akira . . .

"I was influenced by Ritchie Blackmore a *lot*," he explains, *via* Loudness vocalist/translator Minoru Niihara. "Not only guitar, but also attitude and composition. *Everything.*"

Although he doesn't think that Loudness play anything with a noticeably Japanese influence, he concedes that, being from Japan, there *could* well be something of it in there somewhere.

"I have an interest in Japanese melody," he continues. "I like Japanese melody a *lot*, and I play guitar *solos* with very Japanese traits. I got tapes of *Koto* (a Japanese stringed instrument) music and listened to them a lot. I was inspired by that and tried to put a lot of it into my playing."

As with most guitarists at the learning stage, his early days were spent listening mainly to other players, the three mentioned above obviously being the main ones. Plus, he's always liked Deep Purple (no surprise), Genesis and Rush.

"Now I listen to *all* things," explains Akira. "I'm not interested in guitar albums. If I *have* to listen to guitar albums I'm going to listen to my own," he says, with a mischievous grin designed to disguise the fact that he's probably being truthful.

An indication of the truth of that last statement comes when I ask him which of the current bunch of players are his favourites or who he rates highly . . .

"I don't listen to hard rock very much, so it's hard to find out who are the great players."

HE'S THOUGHTFUL, taking his time before giving any answers, seemingly disinterested as he peers out of the taxi

window and absorbs the 'sights' of West London through a pair of elegant, stylish shades. (The interview was done on the way to the band's recent show, supporting Saxon, at the *Hammersmith Odeon*).

"I haven't listened to fast guitar players recently. I know Yngwie (Malmsteen). He plays with fast phrasing but also has his own style and character, which is great. Eddie Van Halen has that, too. That's why they both reached a high level very quickly."

I ask which Loudness songs I should listen to if I want to hear his playing at its best, and receive another piece of immodesty which also brings a laugh from Minoru, obviously delighted at the way Akira is presenting himself:

"He says it's difficult to say after seven albums," comes Minoru's translation. "But maybe 'Let It Go' and 'Street Life Dream' from the new 'Lightning Strikes' LP and also 'Crazy Nights' from 'Thunder In The East'. He likes these in particular because they are good songs. But he says that the guitar playing is *always* great!"

So what, according to Akira, makes a good guitarist?

"To be a good guitarist you should be able to play *all* kinds of music. If you have the technique to cover all areas then you have the ability to express yourself fully. You also need the emotional side as well as the technical side. Both are important. And you have to practice every day to get better."

Take something good and improve on it, that seems to be the Japanese way. With guitar players, though, they might yet have a long way to go to become world leaders. But listening to Akira you feel that the process is already well in hand and being taken *very* seriously. The Japanese way!

PAUL HENDERSON

AKIRA TAKASAKI: The first of the 'real thing' to come out of Japan

Pic Robert Ellis

BON JOVI

NO SLIP TILL HAMMERSMITH

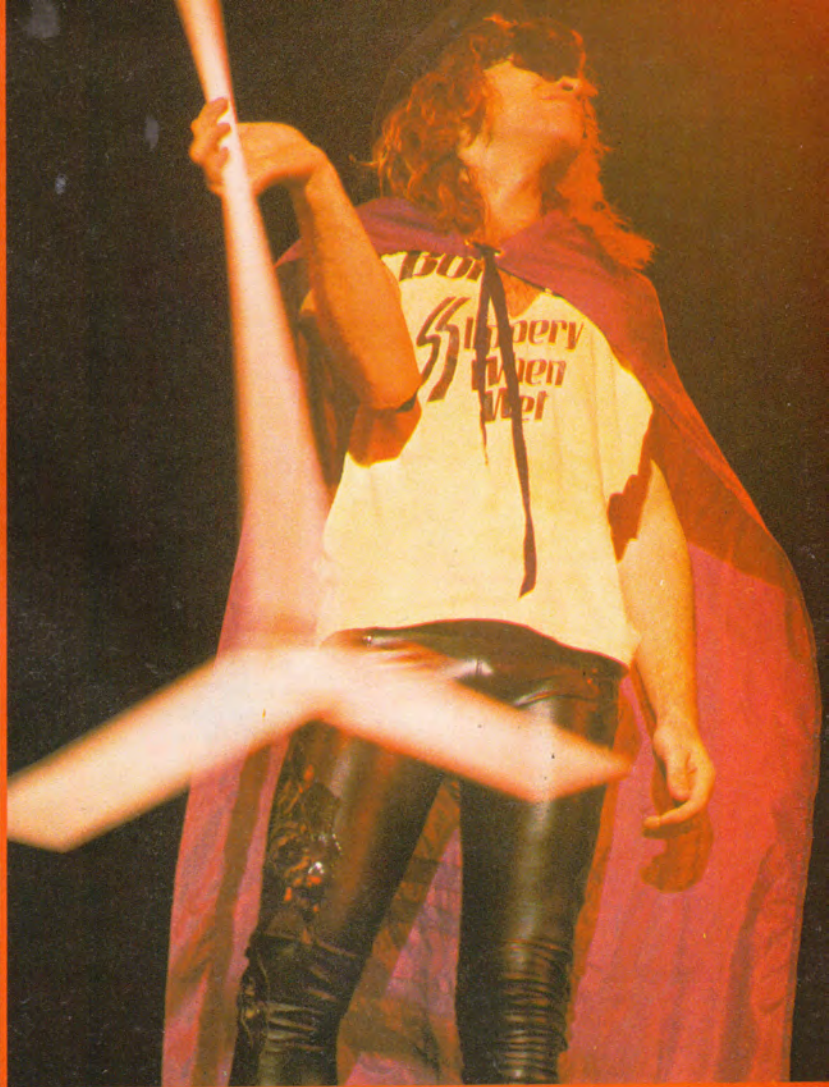
HOWARD JOHNSON talks to JON BON JOVI (pictured here) on the eve of the band's UK tour

HARRY CALLAGHAN is the name of the tough, ruthless, fair, stereotypical, yet enthralling cop played by Clint Eastwood in the 'Dirty Harry' law enforcement movies. And Harry Callaghan is also the pseudonym employed by Bon Jovi frontman Jon Bon Jovi when he checks into American hotels, a pseudonym designed to keep at bay the gaggles of girl groupies who follow him around, girls who'd like nothing better than for Jon to go ahead and make their day! Hard life when you're in demand, huh?

Right now Jon is very heavily the order of the day in the hard rock world. It's no exaggeration to say that Bon Jovi are currently *the* hottest HM property and the biggest success story in such circles during the last five years. From sweeping the floors of many a native New Jersey studio to a chart-burnin' US album, ('Slippery When Wet') a UK single success ('You Give Love A Bad Name') and a sold-out British tour (14 dates) within three LPs is some story for a young man, and needless to say 'Harry' is lapping it up, relishing every choice moment!

"I'm absolutely thrilled with the success we've achieved," he confirms. "We all thought that the new album would do well but it's taken a while for us to realise exactly what scale of success we've reached. Y'see, I never really listen to our records when they're finished – when I'm done, I'm done, but with 'Slippery When Wet' people just kept talking about it to the point

KONTINUEZ PAGE 48



THE BON JOVI *frontline onstage in the US (l-r): Richie Sambora, Jon and Alec John Such*

Pix Ross Halfin

BON

FROM PAGE 46

where I started to think that maybe we had done something pretty good!"

Yet Jon is sufficiently sussed to know that success is a commmodity that lies squarely outside his own field of influence.

"It's the kids who've broken this band without a doubt," he enthuses. "Radio is too fickle to bring you lasting success, you can be in one year and out the next. We really have come through the traditional way. We're not an overnight sensation, we're a hard-working band with over 500 shows under our belts. We've never put on an elaborate show or gone out in make-up, it's always been a very honest thing, and people have responded to that!"

Which pleases him no end!

"Well, let me put it this way," he laughs, "It doesn't suck having a happening record, but we do take it with a pinch of salt and try to keep the whole thing in proportion. After all, we're still a support band!"

True enough. Despite having an album that's reached Number One in the *Billboard* charts as I write, Bon Jovi are still warming up arenas for hoary old boogie merchants 38 Special. Such are the strange machinations of the US record industry.

"Yeah, we've got five or six more shows to go and then we won't have to do it anymore. I must say, though, there's been no jealousy from 38 Special, they're the classiest guys in the world. Attendances have been going up since we joined the tour so I guess even their accountants are happy!"

I'd say it's this pleasantly down-to-earth, even nonchalant attitude that has endeared Bon Jovi to the UK audience, to the extent that their British tour sold out within hours of tickets appearing (more dates have now been added). Let's face it, with a few worthy exceptions, the UK rock fraternity and excessive US razamatazz acts have never made comfortable bed partners . . .

"Yeah, the UK success has actually pleased me more than anything," admits Jon. "The people over there are just so unimpressed by the glamour of somebody being in a rock band. They just want you to get on with it – shut up and play! I don't give a f**k about all the razamatazz."

Serious about his art he most certainly is. Mr Bon Jovi is ever aware of the need to prove himself as a musician, probably as a result of so much attention being focussed on his undoubted good looks.

"Oh, we've been ragged about that one by everyone. It's great that people are starting to say, 'They're good-looking guys but they also play good music'. I'd much rather be known as a great songwriter than a sex symbol, that makes me puke!

"I want Bon Jovi to be recognised as a *band*. Whenever people do interviews with us now I insist that they talk to the band as well. Richie (Sambora, BJ guitarist) really does play a key role in the band and he should be recognised for it!"

Jon believes that the key to Bon Jovi's success lies in their open-mindedness towards all good music . . .

"The music we listen to is so varied that it's bound to come out when we write ourselves. I've got the new David And David album on my ghetto-blaster at the moment and Richie is listening to Johnny Winter. In the dressing room before we go on we play a lot of AC/DC and Aerosmith, but without those *other* influences there would never have been horns on 'Social Disease' or the acoustic guitars on 'Wanted Dead Or Alive' (both tracks on the 'SWW' LP). We've been building up to this kind of thing since we started!"

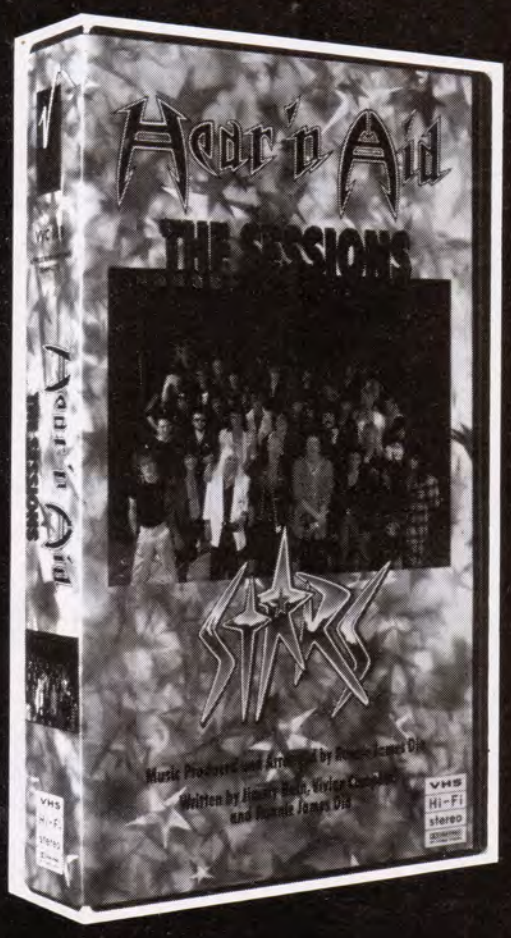
And Jon acknowledges that Bon Jovi's critically dismissed second album, '7800° Fahrenheit', for all its faults, helped on this score . . .

"I really can't complain about that album; it was a rushed job but that was my fault and in a way it was the perfect second step because it allowed us more time to build!"

Now that Bon Jovi have achieved headlining status, they're determined that it won't go to their heads. They start the UK tour on November 9 (*Ipswich Gaumont*) and from then on it'll be Main Attraction status all the way . . .

"We're just gonna go out and rock the way we have been doing, putting on a two-hour show focussing on the music. I can't play for the press, I can only play for the fans, and with that in mind I'll be making sure that we always take out a good support act with us. We actually wanted the Vinnie Vincent Invasion to open the shows in Britain but they couldn't get their work papers together in time, so I believe that FM will be doing most of the shows with Queensryche taking over on a couple in London and one in the North. (*See* Mayhem *for full details*). Britain will be the start of the endless tour!" he laughs. Good job he likes the lifestyle!

"I love hotel rooms, man, so the fact that this will be going on till April or May is great! I'm doing an in-store later today so I'll get three or four new albums and there's a note here by my bed saying: *'We deliver pizza in 30 minutes'!* I mean, hey, what could be better?"



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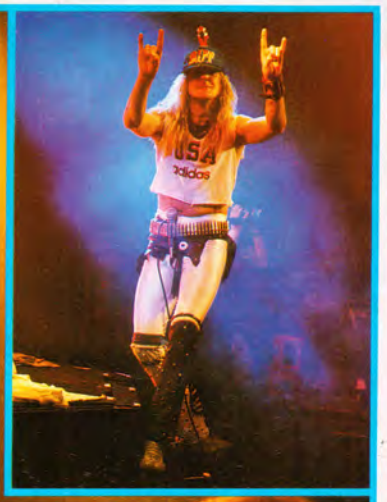

THE EAGLE HAS... FLOUNDERED!

Pix Robert Ellis

SAXON (inset pic features vocalist Biff): 'They don't have their hearts in it anymore'

SAXON/LOUDNESS
Odeon, Birmingham

AFTER THE fun 'n' frolics of witnessing Metallica and Anthrax recently doing a whole heap to restore the name of Metal to the realms of the creditable and the profitable, it was disappointing, but not altogether surprising, to see the *Odeon* lamentably lacking in paying public for tonight's performance.

Metal is once again becoming a young man's ball game and those who can't stand the heat . . . well!

Japanese band Loudness' first fully-fledged UK tour has, judging from tonight's laborious performance, been disappointing. The band's dress sense hasn't got any better – vocalist Minoru Niihara sporting the most ludicrous set of space boots ever – and they've got a lot to learn about how best to present themselves in a supporting slot.

From opening shot 'Crazy Doctor' through to the moment they left the stage, the four-man outfit got it all wrong. Fighting against a truly abominable sound wherein bass and vocals were barely distinguishable didn't help matters too much, but to include a drum solo, a guitar solo *and* a bass solo was stupidity in its most naked guise. Audience participation is not a particularly British custom at the best of times, and for an opening act such a ploy fell flat on its arse!

Loudness played about five songs, of which 'Crazy Nights', despite its title, was about the most inspiring, but the band left the stage without much positive response in their pockets!

The giant silver eagle with its roving red eyes promised that Saxon would at least provide some kind of a spectacle; sadly, it was not to be. 'Battle Cry', a track from the band's new 'Rock The Nations' LP, opened the show in lacklustre fashion indicating the direction the performance was going to take. To be blunt, Saxon don't have their hearts in it any more. They know they're on a downhill slide and are either too old or too lazy to try and turn things around. Even the resurrection of an old classic such as '20,000 feet' (Biff singing a whole octave lower than on the 'Strong Arm Of The Law' LP version) did nothing to raise the gig from the mundane.

For all the chest-beating of the likes of 'Rock The Nations' and 'Back On The Streets', there was only the same old turgid dross on display without any of the naive enthusiasm which can make such obvious rubbish exciting. New boy bassist Paul Johnson was workmanlike rather than inspirational, and though the band proclaimed 'We Came Here To Rock' there didn't seem to be too many convinced of that fact – least of all onstage!

I remember many a time when I've been thrilled by Saxon live, but let's face facts, this band isn't the powerhouse it once was. Biff in particular looks like a tired workhorse rather than a lively, lean leader. It's a shame to have to say it because the Saxon chaps are all good guys, and if Birmingham was an off-night I apologise, but I have to call this a very sad performance.

HOWARD JOHNSON

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CLOCK ROCK SHOCK!

THE SPACE-AGE EDDIE (main pic) and IRON MAIDEN (inset): 'A power-crazed pageantry of maelstrom music and mayhemic melodrama. . . intensive instrumentation and ostentatiously animated gimmickry' (cont. Roget's Thesaurus)

Pix Robert Ellis

FROM PAGE 49

IRON MAIDEN/ EMPIRE
Apollo, Manchester

SOMEWHERE ON TOUR, right now, is perhaps British Metal's most spectacularly presumptuous shock-shooting showcase yet; a power-crazed pageantry of maelstrom music and mayhemic melodrama, it balances intensive instrumentation and ostentatiously animated gimmickry against intrinsic lightheartedness and geniality. Somewhere On Tour is Iron Maiden . . .

Somewhere with them is Empire, the band featuring one of their most commendable contemporaries, Paul Samson. Formidable function though it is, this neat new outfit – now with the highly-regarded Mick White on vocals – are doing an admirable job as curtain-raisers, naturally devoid of any of the headliner's theatrical luxuries, but working hard to neutralise this with the honesty of fine, fine songs and mature musicianship. 'One Day Heroes' and 'Who Do You Think You're Foolin'' underline the strength of the material, as indeed does the punchy 'Fighting Man', while older numbers like 'Tramp', from Samson's solo album, still stand tall and proud in comparison. Indeed, although tonight's sound wasn't the best they're ever likely to get, Empire proved that Paul Samson still has a lot to offer.

And so have Iron Maiden, although for some wide-eyed witnesses of this extraordinarily extravagant exhibition this might seem hard to believe. Let's face it, this is the *ultimate* Maiden show to date, and you realise that from the precociously climactic opening of '2 Minutes To Midnight', which finds vocalist Bruce Dickinson skipping before the neon-studded, 'Blade Runner'-flavoured back-drop, strapped into a leather jacket embroidered with illuminable piping while the crowd recoil in excitement.

What follows is a murderous mosaic of Maiden trademarks; two highly-tuned guitars scrambling up the sides of a soaring, piercing vocal, drums that seem to get everywhere, and *that* bass – punched-up in the mix and frequently fired from the chest. There's 'Sea Of Madness', 'Children Of The Damned', 'Stranger In A Strange Land', 'Wasted Years'. . . lights, lights and more lights, twisting and flashing on a rig that seems to have a mind of its own as it sinks and rises at will. Then there's 'Rime Of The Ancient Mariner', with a back-drop that plonks you on the deck of an old galleon and a back-*lash* that plonks you on the deck of the hall. And then there's 'Heaven Can Wait' and Eddie . . .

Eddie's just back from Somewhere In Time – the 'Powerslave' bandages have gone to reveal a lean, mean, muscle 'n' metal machine, 15 feet high if it's an inch and armed to the teeth. The idea is this: he attacks Bruce, Bruce retaliates with a tripod-set machine gun and scores a direct hit in an explosive, pantomime-esque exchange, much to the delight of the audience who, by rights, should now be in a state of '*Look behind you!*' amusement. Only tonight things don't quite go as planned . . .

Eddie lurches off and 'Phantom Of The Opera' speeds Maiden towards the *real* party-piece of the show. This occurs during 'Iron Maiden' when, all of a sudden, Nicko McBrain's drum-kit begins to elevate as an enormous replica of Eddie's futuristic face inflates beneath it and two huge hands spring outward from the foot of the stage. With Nicko now some 20-odd feet in the air the band thrash to a cacophonous climax and, although they return for four triumphant encores in the shape of 'Number Of The Beast', 'Run To The Hills', 'Running Free' and 'Sanctuary', it's this original *finale* which etches itself on your mangled mind.

Somewhere In Time *all* Metal shows will be this entertaining.

MARK PUTTERFORD

JOURNEY
Coliseum, Seattle

THIS WAS always gonna be Journey's night.

The initial reaction to their appearance was quite fanatical, and it became obvious that this was a journey to 15,000 personal odysseys, a land where reality meets fiction and music meets perfection.

Why all the fuss? Because, to put it as succinctly as possible, Journey were f*****g brilliant! And when something is *that* special, the natural reaction is to scream your balls off in appreciation. Journey live is all about two-and-a-half hours of aural perfection, free of long-winded solos and packed with classic material. And whilst the majority of their contemporaries sweat blood and tears to find the best sound, the classic material and the rapturous reactions, they come to Journey with the smoothness of a grease-smeared waltz.

Absolutely every conceivable aspect of Journey live is executed with the finest know-how: the best live sound I've ever heard, and a stage-set that is both spectacular and uncluttered. Journey don't have floor-to-ceiling *Marshall* walls; all their equipment is neatly tucked away beneath the stage, making this production unique in rock terms.

And the material? Oh come on, d'ya really need to ask? Every Journey number is a classic and, when matched with new album material, it made for a smooth ride enhanced with inspired pieces of improvisation.

As for style, give Journey a massive '10' without any difficulty. Vocalist Steve Perry led the way, stylish tart that he is, strutting 'n' strolling, always with head held high and chest out, while Neal Schon had the time and the space to study his guitar in detail, exploring every inch with a range of grimaces and groans that would befit any respected Guitar Hero. Keyboardsman Jonathan Cain, meanwhile, breezed into the dance club with swift ease, confirming that Journey possess the perfect combination of apparent spontaneity and brute professionalism.

The tour will continue across America well into December and I'm praying for you lot back home that this show then hits *your* road. Simply the best gig of the year.

STEFFAN CHIRAZI

MORE REVIEWZ OVER PAGE

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FROM PREVIOUZ PAGE

ROCK GODDESS
Marquee, London

PROBABLY BECAUSE there aren't many of them around, relatively speaking, all-girl bands are still looked upon firstly as *all-girl* bands and only secondly as rock *bands*. For related reasons which are many and complex, Rock Goddess are just one of those bands for whom even a deserved amount of success must seem frustratingly elusive – effectively out of reach due to the sexist and/or patronising attitudes which pervade the rock world with respect to its female performers.

I'd seen Rock Goddess only once before (on television, at that) and wasn't impressed. But that was some time ago, and a lot of lager has passed over the *Marquee's* bars since that show. They've now got better songs and have noticeably improved as players; instrumentally they may still not be outstanding individual talents, but they do work well as a cohesive unit.

Frankly, they were a *lot* better than I expected. As well as being well-written and thoughtfully arranged, 'My Name's Not Marilyn Monroe' and 'I Ain't Got A Man To Love' were just two of several songs to feature and benefit from some excellent three-part vocal harmonies – tight, accurate and generally of a quality the *Marquee*'s walls aren't used to.

In fact, it's probably fair to say that, in terms of performance, the vocal department is Rock Goddess' real strength. As well as the harmonies, Jody Turner's strong lead vocal was also impressive, and although her guitar sound was often a little muddy due to the heavy use of effects, her short solos were fired out with precision and, on occasion, a delightfully delicate touch.

Rock Goddess deserve more attention (for their music) than they are currently getting.

PAUL HENDERSON

MOURNBLADE
Wellington, London

TONIGHT, A personal revelation. Here I am, back against the record machine, bullet-belt chipping the perspex, and onstage perhaps the future of Heavy Metal. Well, not exactly but a damn good attempt nonetheless. 'Days of future past' might be a possible and passable description of the kind of decimation that Mournblade kick up. Like, say, a groove tube journey into the excitable throbbing thunder of Hawkwind (OK, lads, I know you didn't want me to mention them, but . . .), Motörhead and, more succinctly, The Pink Fairies . . . maybe even early Jefferson Airplane!

Oh boy, am I excited! Look at vocalist and lead loony Dünken F Müllet (far out!) parading around the stage like a dream cocktail of Alice Cooper ('Pretties For You' period) and Boy George, but with the baddest manners you'll stumble upon in a small town bar like this. He's probably a product of the 'Clockwork Orange' generation, a rugged individualist of no fixed abode and, given the right song, a magic vocalist who out-shouts even Lucky Leif (*aka* Bob Calvert!) in the the more rebellious passages!

And what a brilliant, nay orgasmic, star-tripping live show! Cool to see so much happening on the stage, like the dry-ice floating around, and what a gas the backdrops, screen movies and lasers are, not to mention the apocalyptic sight of Larry Wallis lookalike Ritchie Jones battering six shades of spit out of his tatty looking *Strat*. Oops! And there goes another oscillator piloted by Del 'Detmar' Jasonch boiling out of the inhouse PA sounding like a cranky crossover compatible with Jon Lord, Keith Emerson, the Kitchen Sink and long-lost-but-not-forgotton wizard Dik Mik (the Ladbroke Grover partially a member of Hawkwind. Arggh! That name again!)

Best song? Just *has* to be the ace riffing of 'Sidewinder', something to do with Capt. Lockhead's starfighters I believe, visually supported by a breathtaking motion movie on the giant silver screen behind drummer Magpie (a Mancunian and ex-Tora Tora!).

OK. This is the best band on the pub/club circuit right now and if you don't believe me then you're a bunch of utter, utter twats! So there!

DEREK OLIVER

IQ
Marquee, London

IT'S BEEN a while since our respective paths last crossed, IQ and I, since when of course the band have been through a fairly major overhaul. Vocalist Paul Menel has come in to replace Peter Nicholls who has re-emerged with Niadem's Ghost. Whatever your feelings about Nicholls' qualities as a vocalist, it cannot be denied that the man had stamped his mark, visually at least, on IQ. Menel approaches the task in a far less dramatic manner, although his influence on the new material appears to be working in inverse proportion. And therein lies IQ's problem.

What Menel has brought to the new IQ sound is a far greater commerciality (check out 'Still Life' and 'Screaming' as it *segues* into '1000 Days' for evidence), as well as turning the lyrical content around so that it faces very squarely the real world – 'No Love Lost' and 'Nonzamo', for instance. This is fine, this is great, IQ may never ditch the 'Progressive' tag (even assuming they would want to) but they do desperately need to move on. What's holding them back, I suspect, is the need to cater to longstanding fans who still want to hear the older material, 'Widow's Peak', 'The Wake', *et al*.

Now, granted, you have to take these things slowly, but Menel is obviously uncomfortable singing these songs and it doesn't sound right when he adopts Nicholls' vocal mannerisms. What I'd like to see is IQ ditching this old set as quickly as possible (naturally you can't throw *everything* out but as much as is acceptable) and coming through with enough fresh material for Menel to get to grips with. Paul Menel is not Peter Nicholls and I think the fans should accept that and let him get on with his own style and songs.

DAVE DICKSON

BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND
Madison Square Garden, New York

AS THE houselights went down, there arose a crescendo of "Yaays!" from the virtually sold-out house, not the shrill screams I'm used to hearing from a crowd at *The Garden*, my first clue that Bob Seger was not going to be your average Heavy Metal show. The next indication of this was the totally unpretentious entrance Seger made, simply appearing onstage, trim, slim and fit, going straight away into 'American Storm', the first single from his current 'Like A Rock' album. The song was given a very relaxed, almost slowed-down treatment, with the amazing Alto Reed bringing out an enormous, oversized saxophone!

The stage looked simple all the way around, no frills here at all, everything pared down to basics and making for a refreshing change. Without smoke-bombs to disguise the music, this was American rock 'n' roll the way it used to be before the new crop of young bands started trying to upstage each other with more and more elaborate stage shows, obscuring the songs and the musicianship. In comparison, Seger comes off as near timeless.

After introducing a "song about Memphis" and a "song about Detroit" he went into 'Main Street'; are we talking quintessential Americana here or what? Listen to the words and it soon becomes clear that this man is the original all-American small-town chronicler, a master of his craft before Cougar, Springsteen *et al* won world acclaim and crowns of glory.

During 'Tightrope' the female back-up singers (featuring Crystal, formerly with J C Mellencamp) were spotlit in a synchronised sway *à la* Prince's Wendy and Lisa. The two buxom women wore poured-on red tops with various parts of their curvaceous anatomy showing through and long dark curls cascading around their shoulders. Talk about *the* American cream-dream . . .

After 'Like A Rock', featuring 15 – yes, *15!* – repeats of the line *'like a rock'*, Seger announced that he had played in Buffalo, NY, the previous night where "I just got engaged!", going on to dedicate 'Living Inside My Heart' to his new *fiancée*. Catching sight of the man and his intended at the after-concert party, I was struck by the obvious – the two glowing lovers looked like they'd been sent by Central Casting to portray the ultimate American rock 'n' roll couple. Everywhere he turned, Seger was confronted by camera flashes, or a TV crew, while his lady-friend clung demurely to his arm, looking about 19 years old, all in black leather and teetering on spike heels. It seems that Seger carries his 'Mr. America' monicker on and off stage . . .

BOB SEGER: 'One performer you can always count on'

Back to the show, where 'We've Got Tonight' was presented to the audience in that trademark gravelly growl. The whole performance was less frenetic, less high-energy than the last time I saw him about seven years ago in Los Angeles. Maybe being so happy in his personal life has given him the confidence to just go ahead and present his material straight. The band, right on cue every step of the way, was obviously well-rehearsed and ran like the proverbial well-oiled machine.

'Turn The Page' an accurate account of life on the road, was strikingly sincere in its presentation and execution, though sadly several other favourites were omitted from the show – 'Katmandu', 'Betty Lou', 'Fortunate Son' (a fave in concert), 'Night Moves', 'Fire Down Below', *etc*.

After closing with 'Hollywood Nights', I had the feeling that although Seger might not be getting better, he certainly isn't getting worse. And in today's rock 'n' roll climate, with a new 'next wave' coming out every 20 minutes, such consistency is a rare and precious commodity. It's nice to know there's one performer you can *always* count on.

IDA S. LANGSAM

FM
Odeon, Birmingham

GOOD TO see a major label (*Portrait*) getting behind a rock band so heavily! Following the Magnum tour, FM will be opening for Bon Jovi, so if they can't carve themselves a *niche* in the market after all that exposure, well . . .

If tonight's support slot with Magnum is anything to go by, FM won't have any problem. Slick, tight and ultra-professional, the lads have studied all the best aspects of AOR and, let's be honest, rip them all off to make their mark. It's Survivor here, Journey there and Foreigner *everywhere!* Plagiarism personified, but let's say here an' now that FM do it exceedingly well.

I found the FM album, 'Indiscreet', a little lacklustre, too sugary-sweet, but the band *do* come much more alive in the flesh, bassist Merv Goldsworthy and drummer Pete Jupp providing us with all kinds of showmanship antics. Then, of course, there's Steve Overland, and if there's any one factor that will bring FM success, it's him. His voice is the classic British blues rock tool rather than the high-pitched poncey version that most AORers favour. It gives FM a warmth that their music alone rather lacks, as does his highly affable stage manner.

I went to this show expecting nothing and came away quietly impressed.

HOWARD JOHNSON

ZZ TOP
Wembley Arena, London

I DIDN'T dig it, not really.

I've been sitting here staring boss-eyed at this s**tty piece of white paper for ten minutes now wondering how to say it politely and fairly, but the truth is I didn't really dig it.

Billy Gibbons ain't the medicine man he used to be. The set, including a four-song encore, lasted exactly 75 minutes; and those filthy rip-off beer bars charged £1.15 for a pint of thin yellow cat's piss that wouldn't get a fly high . . . Mother of Blabbering God! If a man can't get his hands on a good glass of beer at a ZZ Top show then where the hell can he?

Awright . . . those are just incidentals, I know, but playing for just 75 minutes? What's that? More watered-down and over-priced beer?

ZZ Top have recorded some of my favourite rock 'n' roll albums; by rights they should be one of the finest rock 'n' roll bands in the world today, we all know they're one of the biggest.

But they were never great at *Castle Donington* last year, and on their first night (of four) at *Wembley Arena* this year they probably looked great to the walking credit card and suit with the bright red Elton John eye-glasses sitting to my right who clapped along like an old-age pensioner at the annual Darby & Joan knees-up, but to me it looked like pure Las Vegas . . .

The set is beautifully lit and the lasers are fun, but the whole ZZ Top act, the way Gibbons and Hill work it – just like in the videos, ma, right down to the funny hand-signals in 'Sharp Dressed Man', right down to wearing the cheap sunglasses on . . . right down to the Goddamn beards and those Hank Marvin goose-steps – is so supremely choreographed these days, so tame and insistently tongue-in-cheek, that by the time we've drifted through perfunctory versions of 'Waiting For The Bus' and 'Jesus Just Left Chicago' and we're smack into the first crowd-pleaser, 'Gimme All Your Lovin'' we've seen all there is to see.

No blood, no real guts, no balls-on-the-line action, just more cute dance-steps.

It's *exactly* like watching the videos. I like the videos as much as the next fool at the bar, but I wouldn't pay £10 a ticket to go out on a night cold enough to freeze a penguin's chuff to sit and watch some Goddamn ZZ Top videos!

When I listen to albums like 'Deguello' and 'Tres Hombres' it ain't key-rings and long beards and silly walks I think of. But when I go and see ZZ Top play live these days that's all they've got to offer me.

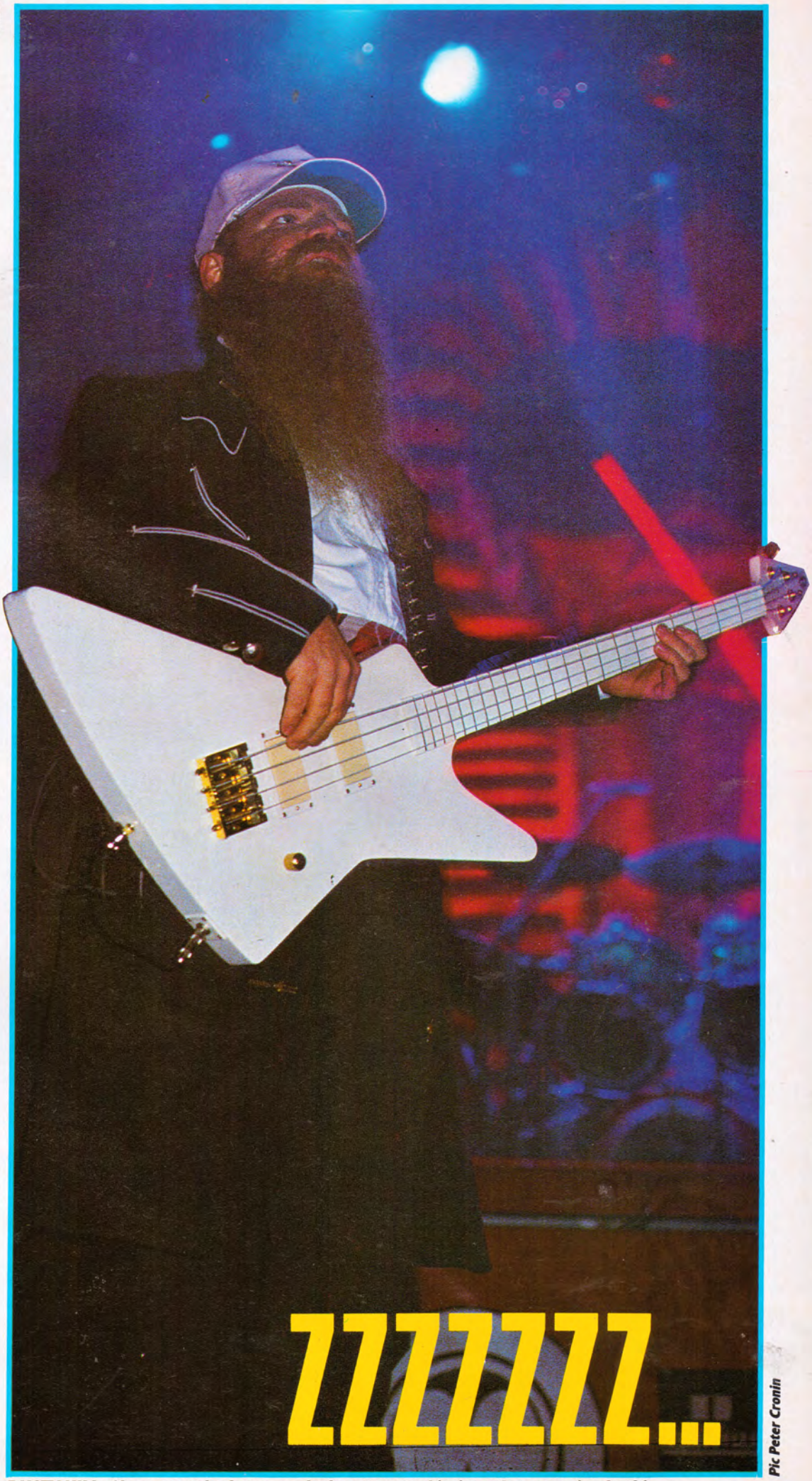
Well, sheeeeet.

They didn't play badly and they have a well-balanced set, too short of course, but clean and precise and always *on time* . . . and, well, yes, so what else can you show me?

I wasn't bored, not at all, I was pleasantly and inoffensively entertained, and there's nothing wrong with that, as my dear, feeble-minded, sweet little old grandma would say . .

Maybe next time I'll give my ZZ tickets to Grandma. She's got a beard too.

MICK WALL



Pic Peter Cronin

DUSTY HILL: 'So supremely choreographed, so tame and insistently tongue-in-cheek'

TWO TONE REVIVAL

They may have fallen a bit behind the rest of the LA brat pack, but BLACK 'N BLUE reckon that their new 'Nasty Nasty' album should set that situation to rights. As frontman JAIME ST. JAMES (below) tells MARK PUTTERFORD, "We're right behind 'em with a flame-thrower up their ass!"

Ross Halfin

BLACK 'N BLUE with producer GENE SIMMONS (far left): "We knew that he wouldn't come in and screw up what we do"

NASTY NASTY rock 'n' roll will always be the best. I mean, a riff's more a *stiff* if it doesn't sear your ears and shock you like a lightning bolt; a bass line's more of a bad sign if it isn't charging at you like a souped-up steamroller; and a drummer's a bummer if he can't belt out a brain-bruising beat. Think of the power, think of the aggression, think of the violence, think . . . *nasty!*

It just isn't the same when it's tame, it loses its spice when it's simply nice, it isn't as likely to pleaze without the sleaze (OK, OK . . . enough of the poetry!). I mean, can you imagine Angus captivating the crowds with 'Highway To Church' or 'Good Boy Boogie'? Could you see Ozzy moving the masses with 'Diary Of An Introvert' or 'The Ultimate Favour'? Or could you visualise Lemmy flooring the fans with 'Pat You On The Back' or 'Killed By Old Age'? 'Course not. It has to be a touch *nasty*, right? If you buy an 'XXXX-rated' video cassette you *don't* want it to be about Australian lager, do you?

So let's talk *nasty* . . . or more to the point, 'Nasty Nasty', the latest volatile vinyl from Portland's punch-happy hooligans, Black 'N Blue. It's all there – from the thundering, prime-time AC/DC feel of the title track, through the classic chantalongability of 'I Want It All (I Want It Now)' and the vicious 'Kiss Of Death' to the driving devilry of '12 O'Clock High', 'Do What You Wanna Do' and 'Rules', there's a feast of wicked guitars, gut-rumbling bass and dynamic drums, tastefully topped by the vehement vocals of Jaime St. James and knocked into suitably *nasty* shape by producer and Kiss man Gene Simmons. It makes for a pleasant (in a *nasty* sort of way!) change from the wishy-washy wares a lot of West Coast bands are coming up with at the moment.

Jaime St. James thinks so too. Bubbling down the phone line all the way from Los Angeles, the amiable vocalist makes little effort to conceal his joy at having produced something as *nasty* as 'Nasty Nasty' . . .

"WHEN WE completed the album our reaction was, 'We've finally got it right!'" he exclaims. "We set out to make a raw rock record that captured Black 'N Blue's live energy – something I thought was missing from our first two albums – and I think we've achieved it this time. We're really happy – it's the best thing we've *ever* done!"

I agree. Maybe the reason is that this time around the band (also featuring Tommy Thayer and Jeff 'Woop' Warner on guitars, Partick Young on bass and Pete Holmes on drums) had more control over proceedings; before they'd complained about 'letting things float into other people's hands'.

"Yeah, I think you're right," says Jaime. "With the last album we did have control at first, but we lost it; it kinda became the producer's and the record company's *(Geffen)* record, y'know? We had some real good songs, but they were over-polished.

"This time, though, we made a smart decision early on by asking Gene Simmons to produce the album, because after being on the road with Kiss we knew that he wouldn't come in and screw up what we do. He'd seen us onstage every night, he'd seen us sweat our asses off, and he knew what we needed to capture on record. The first two producers we worked with (Dieter Dierks on 'Black 'N Blue' and Bruce Fairbairn on 'Without Love') had never even seen us live! So the best thing we could do to keep control this time was ask Gene to work with us, cos he knows exactly where we're coming from."

Did Gene have any effect on the direction of the material?

"He did have some input, yes," Jaime explains, "but basically we had the direction of the album all figured out before we even talked to him. We came off the road and went straight into the rehearsal room to write some songs that we wished we'd had on tour to play every night. Gene then came along and just helped us get the sound we wanted to project those songs – y'know, that 'live' feeling.

"Occasionally, we'd be stuck for a way to play a certain piece and he'd go, 'Here, try doing it like this', or whatever, so he helped in ways like that. He also suggested a coupla titles, and changed the way we were singing 'I Want It All (I Want It Now)' . . . so we kinda went along with him and gave him a songwriting credit on a coupla tunes.

"Yeah, Gene was great. I mean, we've been real lucky to work with such excellent producers as Dieter Dierks and Bruce Fairbairn – they were our first choices for both albums – but Gene just seemed more suited to us. Y'know, he'll sit there with a great big lump of snot hanging right out of his nose and there's no way he'll remove it! The guy knows what *dirty* means! And he couldn't give a damn what the record company wants, whereas other guys will sit there with a little packet of 'sugar' in their back pocket – y'know? – and just worry about what the record company expects of the album."

Was Gene responsible for the appearance of original Kiss drummer Peter Criss on the album?

"No," laughs Jaime. "I was just hanging out here in LA when I happened to see Peter. So I say, 'Hey, you're Peter Criss, aren't you? I'm Jaime St. James from a band called Black 'N Blue and we're working with Gene Simmons at the moment'. And he says, 'Aww, *Geen-ooo!!*' He tells me that he hasn't spoken to Gene in ages, so I say, 'Why don't you come down and sing on our record?' And sure enough Peter turned up to party one day. Gene told me that he hadn't seen Peter for years – I guess they'd still remained friends, but weren't too close anymore – so we just kinda left 'em to chat about old times for a coupla hours!

"Peter sang on a number called 'Best In The West' – a sorta 'live in the studio' party tune we wanted to put at the end of the record – along with a coupla other friends of ours, like Ron Keel and his guitarist Marc Ferrari. I've known Keel since before they got a deal and Ron asked me to sing on his last album, 'The Final Frontier', so I thought I'd return the compliment."

TALKING of compliments, it must've been nice to be chosen by Journey keyboard player Jonathan Cain to record his 'I'll Be There For You' song. How did that come about?

"Well, our guy at *Geffen*, John Kalodner, knew Jonathan and told us that he had a song which was gonna be used in some movie, only he hadn't found the right band to record it. When Kalodner suggested us Jonathan said, 'A Heavy Metal band? Umm, I don't think so . . .', but after he came to see us play live he was totally blown away and asked us to do it. It's a great tune and we really put a lot of work into it, but unfortunately it didn't get used in the movie for some reason. Still, we felt it was too good to waste, so we put it on the album anyway."

It is a good tune, but don't you *think it sounds a little out of place on the new LP?*

"Actually, I'd have to agree with you," admits Jaime. "It's totally different from the songs we did with Gene; it's a different kinda tune – not hard and driving like all the others – and it's produced differently too. But like I said, we felt it was too good to waste . . . and anyway, what the f**k! It's *still* Black 'N Blue!"

These two-tone terrors were signed to the *Geffen* label on the strength of a five-song demo some three years ago. They were tipped for mega-stardom at that time but have yet to really set the Metal world alight. So are they happy with the progress they've made to date?

"I have to be honest, Mark, and say to you that until we did this album I *was* a little disappointed with our progress," admits Jaime. "Our first album was like, 'Yeah, let's just get it *out!*' and our second one was us trying to correct the mistakes we made first time around. But this time we've made a great album and already it's doing better than the others . . . so now I'm happy!

"Y'know we've never thought about selling 900 million albums or anything like that, because bands who sell huge amounts of one record so quickly usually just fade away after a while. Obviously, it'd be nice to get a platinum album and make a million dollars, but right now all we're concerned about is taking it step-by-step, progressing with each LP and building for the future."

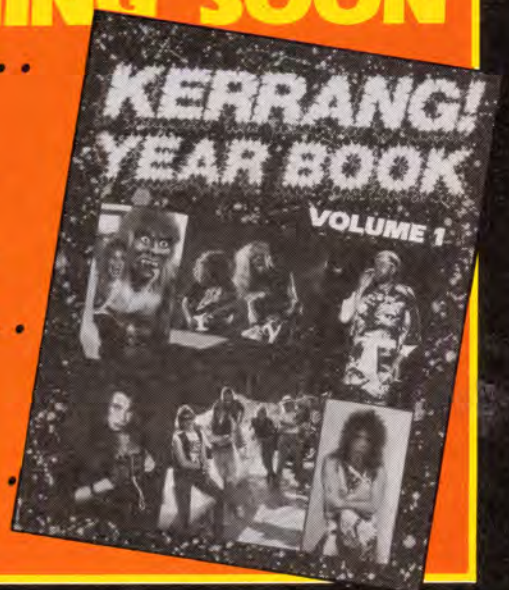
At the moment, though, do you feel as if you've fallen behind the pack?

"Yes," the singer sighs, "but now we're right behind 'em with a flame-thrower up their ass! With this record we've finally got things right and now nothing's gonna stand in our way!"

Black 'N Blue: nice 'n *nasty!*

KOMING SOON

Iron Maiden. . .
Kiss. . .
Bon Jovi. . .
Marillion. . .
Ozzy. . .
Metallica. . .
Warlock. . .
Gary Moore. . .
AC/DC. . .
Dio. . .
and much, much more. . .
full details next issue!



Alan David-Tu. One of a series of illustrations commissioned by TDK

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B.M.R.B. Market Research May '85 – April '86.